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Carrying the Coffin from the Ruins of Warka.

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TRAVELS AND RESEARCHES

IN

CHALDÆA AND SUSIANA;

WITH AN ACCOUNT OF EXCAVATIONS AT

WARKA, THE "ERECH" OF NIMROD,

AND

SHÚSH, "SHUSHAN THE PALACE" OF ESTHER,

IN 1849-52,

UNDER THE ORDERS OF

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR W. F. WILLIAMS OF KARS, BART., K.C.B., M.P.,
AND ALSO OF THE ASSYRIAN EXCAVATION FUND IN 1853-4.

BY

WILLIAM KENNETT LOFTUS, F.G.S.

"Why dost thou build the hall, son of the winged days?—Thou lookest from thy tower to-day: yet a few years, and the blast of the desert comes; it howls in thy empty court."—*Ossian.*

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TO

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR WILLIAM FENWICK WILLIAMS,

OF KARS, BART., K.C.B., M.P., ETC.,

This Volume is Inscribed,

IN ADMIRATION OF HIS BRILLIANT ACHIEVEMENTS,

AND

IN GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE OF FOUR HAPPY YEARS

PASSED UNDER HIS COMMAND

UPON THE TURCO-PERSIAN FRONTIER.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages are due to researches in that remote, and but partially explored region, which, from our childhood, we have been led to regard as the cradle of the human race.

The matter they contain is the result of two visits to the countries in question: first, in connexion with the Turco-Persian Frontier Commission in 1849–52, under the orders of Colonel, now Major-General Sir W. F. Williams, Bart., of Kars; and secondly, in conduct of the Expedition sent out by the Assyrian Excavation Fund, at the end of the year 1853.

On returning to England in the middle of last year, I hoped that the Committee of the above Society would have published *in extenso*, and in

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another form, the fruits of its investigations in Chaldæa and Assyria; but, this plan having been abandoned, I am induced to embody the records of some portion of my journeys and researches in the following pages.

Although this volume does not chronicle the discovery of sculptured palaces, such as the sister-land of Assyria has yielded, yet it comprises accounts of cities existing centuries before the greatness of Nineveh rose to astonish the Eastern world, and of sites containing the funereal remains and relics of primæval races. With the more important of those great necropolis-cities I hope to make the reader familiar.

In my account of Warka, I have, for the sake of brevity, combined the results of my three visits; and, since the modern Sheah custom of burial, to a certain extent, corresponds with that which prevailed at the great Chaldæan cemeteries, I have introduced, in the early part of the work, a description of the celebrated Persian shrines and cemeteries at Meshed 'Alí and Kerbella.

Although the ruins of Babylon have been repeatedly described, I have made a brief allusion to them, and mentioned the most recent discoveries made there, because a work on Chaldæa would be

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necessarily imperfect without some reference to, or description of, its great capital. In doing this, I have touched upon some points which have not hitherto been noticed.

The discoveries made at Shúsh, during the progress of the Frontier Commission, are equally interesting in a biblical, as in an historical sense, for they identify, beyond reach of cavil, the exact position of "Shushan the palace," where the events recorded in the book of Esther took place, and settle many difficult questions connected with the topography of Susa, and the geography of the Greek campaigns in Persia, under Alexander the Great and his successors.

In the course of the work, I have had repeated occasion to refer to the labours, and quote the opinions of others; in doing so, I trust that I have accorded to each his due share in Chaldæan research.

Since there appears to be no golden rule for the orthography of Oriental names—at any rate, as each writer on Eastern subjects adopts his own method of spelling, I have chosen one which, while it approximates as nearly as possible to the native pronunciation, agrees likewise with the written orthography. In carrying this out, I am

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deeply indebted to Mr Redhouse for his valuable corrections; and, although many well-known names appear here in somewhat different guise from that which they usually wear, I conceive that it is better to risk the charge of pedantry than to perpetuate errors. I am, nevertheless, fully aware that there are several inaccuracies in this respect, because the late severe illness of Mr Redhouse prevented my asking his aid until some of the early sheets had passed through the press. These it is proposed to amend, if another edition of the work be required. If, however, the accented vowels be attended to, the reader will approach very nearly to the native pronunciation. The *á* is equivalent to the French *a;* the *é* to the French *é; í* corresponds to the sound of *ee; ú* to that of *oo;* and the guttural aspirate is represented in such words as *'Alí* and *Músá'd.*

It gives me great pleasure here to record my sincere obligations to others of my friends who have aided me with their advice and corrections while the work was in the press; more especially to the Rev. Dr Hamilton, Mr J. F. Nicholson, Mr Radford, Mr Birch, Mr Vaux, and Mr Boutcher. To the last-named gentleman I am likewise indebted for the careful copies on wood of his own

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original drawings, made on the spot for the Assyrian Excavation Society, and also of those (now in the British Museum) made by the friend and companion of my first journey, Mr H. A. Churchill.

I here likewise take the opportunity of acknowledging the aid and encouragement afforded to me on the field of my researches. To General Williams I am in an especial manner indebted for the facilities which, as British Commissioner, he invariably granted to me in carrying out such plans as were advantageous to the success of my labours. During the more recent Expedition on behalf of the Assyrian Excavation Fund, my efforts were materially aided by the position assigned me by the Earl of Clarendon, as an Attaché of our Embassy at Constantinople during the continuance of the Expedition, for which I return my grateful acknowledgments. My thanks are also due to his Excellency Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, the first patron of Assyrian research, who, amidst other and most onerous duties, applied to the Porte for, and obtained, new firmáns for excavation. And, lastly, to Sir Henry Rawlinson I desire to express my obligations for the assistance rendered me in his then official capacity, as

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Consul-General at Bághdád, by his influence with the Turkish authorities and native Arab chiefs.

In conclusion, I hope that the new facts and observations which I am enabled to lay before the reader will insure me some consideration for my literary inexperience.

W. K. L.

Norwood, *December* 1856.

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CHALDÆA AND SUSIANA.

CHAPTER I.

London to Bághdád—Turkish and Persian Troubles—Colonel Williams and the Frontier Commissioners—Constantinople—Mesopotamia—A Flowery Wilderness—The City of Hárúnu-'r-Réshíd—Pestilence—Nedjib and Abdí Pashas.

For many centuries the extensive frontier between Turkey and Persia has been in an unsettled state, continually changing its limits as the strength or influence of either Government for the time prevailed. The affable Persian naturally regards the haughty Osmánli in the light of an intruder upon those rich plains which owned obedience to the might of the Kayanians and Sassanians in the days of Dárab and Shápúr. Religious difference, moreover, adds to the political animosity of the two great Mohammedan powers. The phlegmatic Turk quietly smokes his chibúk, swears by the beard of Omar, and thanks the omnipotent Allah for all the blessings he enjoys; on the other hand, the ardent follower of the martyred 'Alí curses the orthodox believer, and takes every opportunity to insult his patron saints. It may be easily conceived that such political and religious disagreements are frequently productive of a state of anarchy and bloodshed, when the subjects of the two nations come into

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close contact. To add to the difficulties attending any proposed reconciliation, the frontier is inhabited by various predatory races, who regard both Turk and Persian with equal hatred, and who are only too happy to exercise their plundering propensities by incursions into either territory. The internal divisions and jealousies which exist among these warlike tribes fortunately prevent them from combining, as in the days of the Parthians, and proving formidable competitors for the possession of Oriental dominion.

In 1839–40, the outbreak of serious hostilities between the Turkish and Persian Governments, arising from the causes above mentioned, was imminent, and likely, in the course of time, to endanger the tranquillity of the whole world. The Cabinets of England and Russia, influenced doubtless by the proximity of their own frontiers in India and Georgia to the regions in question, and therefore interested in the maintenance of peace, offered their friendly mediation for the purpose of restraining the belligerent attitude of their Mohammedan neighbours. The proposal was accepted, and commissioners from the four powers assembled at Erzerúm, who, after sitting four years, eventually concluded a treaty, one article of which determined that representatives should be sent to survey and define a precise line of boundary which might not admit of future dispute. A joint commission was consequently appointed to carry out this article. The British Government selected Colonel Williams, R.A.,* to this service, his previous experience during the protracted conferences at Erzerúm having eminently qualified him for the task now assigned him. Colonel Tcherikoff, the Russian commissioner, although not a party to the treaty,

* Throughout this volume, "the Hero of Kars" is alluded to under the rank he held at the time as Commissioner for the delimitation of the frontier.

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was equally well chosen to represent the Czar. With these officers were associated Dervísh Pasha, and Mírza Jáfér Khán, the commissioners for Turkey and Persia respectively. Both had been educated in Europe. The former enjoyed the reputation of being the most learned *savant* among his countrymen, an excellent linguist and chemist. The latter soon endeared himself to the members of the various parties by his obliging manners and many acts of kindness and attention.

In January 1849, I was attached by Lord Palmerston as geologist to the staff of Colonel Williams, and directed to lose no time in joining my chief. On reaching Constantinople, and presenting myself, according to instructions, to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe (then Sir Stratford Canning), I learned that Colonel Williams and his party had set out from thence on Christmas-day, and that letters had been received, dated Síwás, giving a deplorable account of the state of the weather and roads. The snow had fallen to such an unprecedented depth, that the greatest difficulty beset their journey, and at several places it was found necessary, after many days' detention, to cut roads for the passage of the mules. Under these circumstances, the ambassador detained me at Constantinople for a few weeks, in the hope that the return of spring would open the communications with the interior, and admit of my travelling with more rapidity.

On the 7th of March I left the shores of the Bosphorus. After the usual disagreeable voyage in a Black Sea steamer, and a cold protracted ride across the Taurus, upon which the snow still lay uncomfortably deep, I at length reached Diarbekir, whence, proceeding down the swollen Tigris on a "kélek," or raft of skins, I arrived at Mosul on the 5th April, and there joined the British commission.

It is no part of my intention to detain my readers

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with any description of "Nineveh, that great city." This has been already done by another and more able pen than mine. Let it suffice to state, that we beheld those astonishing "heaps built by men's hands," and admired the perseverance and determination of our countryman, Layard, who, from these shapeless mounds, exhumed the wondrous series of Assyrian sculptures which now forms such an important feature in our national collection of antiquities. We visited the four great mounds of Koyunjuk, Khorsabád, Káramles, and Nimrúd, marking the angles of the parallelogram which is supposed to enclose Nineveh. The time spent in our visit consumed exactly three days, and it is probably to a similar circuit of its extent that the passage refers—"Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city of three days' journey." *

Bághdád was appointed for the rendezvous of the commissioners; and, as the British party was in advance of the others, we floated down the Tigris on rafts, visiting at our leisure all those points of interest so admirably described by Rich in his "Narrative of a Residence in Koordistan," and subsequently by other travellers.† All being new to us, we fully enjoyed the opportunity, granted to so few. We rambled over the desolate mound of Kál'a Shergat, the ancient capital of Assyria; we landed at Tekrít, celebrated as the birth-place of the romantic Saladin, the Arab hero of the Crusades; and we stood on the plain of Dúra, recalling to mind the golden image erected by Nebuchadnezzar, and the unflinching faith of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego.

* Jonah iii. 3. This expression may, however, refer to the thinly inhabited district between the river Záb on the south, and the Khábúr on the north, which, there is equal reason to believe, constituted the Nineveh of Jonah's mission. The journey between these two rivers occupies exactly three days.

† Mr Layard gives a short description of the numerous ancient sites between Mosul and Bághdád in his "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 464, *et seq.*

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It was midspring. Instead of the arid sands, which the word "desert" implies to the uninitiated in Mesopotamian travel, broad plains of the richest verdure, enlivened with flowers of every hue, met our delighted gaze on either side of the noble river. Coleopterous insects swarmed upon the banks, culling the sweets of the fleeting vegetation. The cry of the velvet-breasted francolin, and the sand-grouse * rushing overhead like an irresistible wind, enticed the most ardent of our party to land, and indulge the love of their favourite sport. The result was not unsuccessful, and little trouble was experienced in providing for our commissariat. Now and then a herd of wild boars was discovered among the jungle, or observed crossing the river: it was seldom that they escaped unsaluted by a volley of bullets, with more or less effect. A bend of the stream sometimes brought us suddenly upon a large Bedouin encampment, whence, on observing the raft, a score or so of swarthy Arab dames, with piercing black eyes and never-failing rows of the whitest teeth, launched forth on inflated sheep skins, and paddled out to meet the "kéleks." They bore on their heads bowls of milk or delicious lebben,† which they disposed of in return for a few small coins. Although the general aspect of the country is monotonous, there is always something to amuse the traveller. Never did a merrier party than ours float down the Tigris upon a fragile raft.

As Bághdád is approached, the pendent branches of the graceful date-tree, and the refreshing green of the pomegranate, with its bright red flowers, become more and more frequent until, many miles above the city, the river flows through one continuous grove. At length the mosques and minarets appear; the goal so long

* The *Francolinus vulgaris* and *Pterocles arenarius* of naturalists.

† Sour clotted milk—the usual Arab beverage.

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wished-for is within sight at last. He must be wholly void of poetry and sentiment in whom the first glimpse

Bághdád and the Tigris.

of those shining domes does not excite at least some spark of emotion. Who is there that does not recall that city where the lively imagination of his youthful days was wont to revel amid palaces shining in splendour, groups of blind beggars, and the glories of the khálífat? Who is there that does not exclaim, "Is this the Bághdád of Hárúnu-'r-Réshíd and the 'Arabian Nights'?" Alas! how fallen! The blind beggars, it is true, still cluster in the bazaars, and are met at every corner of the streets—the misery and filth remain—but where are the palaces and the justice of the Prince of the Faithful? Few relics of its quondam magnificence survive to remind us of the past. A single minaret, a couple of gateways, the wall of a college, and the conical tomb of the beautiful Zobeid, are nearly all that exist of Bághdád as it was in the days of its greatness. To the just khálíf has succeeded a race of Turkish pashas having no interest but their own aggrandizement—no thought but how they can most

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effectually cheat the revenue, enrich themselves, and pass their time in gross debauchery. Exaction and vice are the order of the day. Now and then honourable exceptions occur to this general rule, but these, alas! are few and far between. But of this more anon.

At the date of our arrival (May 5) the whole population of Bághdád was in a state of the utmost alarm and apprehension. In consequence of the rapid melting of the snows on the Kúrdish mountains, and the enormous influx of water from the Euphrates through the Seglawíyya canal, the spring-rise of the Tigris had attained the unprecedented height of 22½ feet. This was about five feet above its ordinary level during the highest season, even exceeding the great rise in 1831, when the river broke down the walls and destroyed no less than 7000 dwellings during a single night, at a time when the plague was committing the most fearful ravages among the inhabitants.

Nedjib Pasha had, a few days previously to our arrival, summoned the population *en masse* to provide against the general danger by raising a strong high mound completely round the walls. Mats of reeds were placed outside to bind the earth compactly together. The water was thus restrained from devastating the interior of the city—not so effectually, however, but that it filtered through the fine alluvial soil, and stood in the serdábs, or cellars, several feet in depth. It had reached within two feet of the top of the bank! On the river side the houses alone, many of which were very old and frail, prevented the ingress of the flood. It was a critical juncture. Men were stationed night and day to watch the barriers. If the dam or any of the foundations had failed, Bághdád must have been bodily washed away. Fortunately the pressure was withstood, and the inundation gradually subsided. The country on all sides for miles was under water, so that there was no possibility

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of proceeding beyond the dyke, except in the boats which were established as ferries to keep up communication across the inundation. The city was for the time an island in a vast inland sea, and it was a full month before the inhabitants could ride beyond the walls.

As the summer advanced, the malaria arising from the evaporation of the stagnant water, produced such an amount of fever that 12,000 died from a population of about 70,000. The mortality at one time in the city reached 120 per day—and no wonder, when a person on being first attacked was made to swallow a large quantity of the juice of unripe grapes! The streets presented a shocking spectacle of misery and suffering. The sick lay in every direction—at the doors of houses, in the bazaars, and open spaces; while those recently smitten or just recovering were to be seen staggering along by the wall sides or supported with sticks. The gates of the city were beset with biers—some carried on men's shoulders to the adjacent cemeteries, others on the backs of mules to the sacred shrines of Meshed 'Alí and Kerbella.

Although our quarters were fixed in a small summer-house and garden at Gherára, an hour's distance from the city, the party was not exempt from the prevailing epidemic. All in turn suffered from fever, and at times there was scarcely a servant, out of our large suite, able to attend upon the sick.

In consequence of the delay arising from the Turkish commissioner's non-arrival at the appointed time, and from certain intricate questions which required a reference to the home Governments, the idea was abandoned of proceeding to the frontier until the summer should be past. In fact, it would have been impossible at that season to bear the fearful heat at the head of the Persian Gulf. Even at Bághdád, during the day, in summer, the thermometer

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in the shade often rises to 117° Fahr.; and frequently, when the wind blows from the south, the oppression on the senses is so great as to be almost unendurable.* The atmosphere is, however, dry, consequently the lassitude produced is not to be compared with that experienced in a moist climate, like that on the sea-coast of India, or of the Gulf. The heat of the day is relieved in some measure by the agreeable temperature of the night.

Our time was spent in making preparations for the approaching campaign, purchasing horses and mules, hiring servants, and obtaining information likely to be useful in the course of our future wanderings. Much of our leisure was passed in the agreeable society of the English residents at Bághdád; and our sojourn there must ever be a subject of pleasing reminiscence to the members of the commission. Nothing could exceed the attention and hospitality lavished upon us by the consul-general, Colonel (now Sir Henry) Rawlinson, Captain Felix Jones, and that small party of Englishmen whose lot it was to make the city of the khálífs their temporary home.

Bághdád has been so frequently described, that it forms no part of my intention to dwell upon it. Other and less-visited spots invite our notice.

The state of the pashalic was anything but satisfactory at this period. The cruel exactions and oppressive conduct of Nedjib Pasha, who had for many years farmed the revenues, were at length producing their inevitable fruits. Revolt and disaffection reigned everywhere among his subjects. The Beni Lám Arabs, along the lower course of the Tigris, broke out into open rebellion, in consequence of the pasha having placed that tribe under their sworn foes, the Montefik, and thrown into

* We now had positive evidence of the statement made to us in the mountains concerning Bághdád, that birds were so distressed by the heat, as to sit on the date-trees with their mouths open, panting for fresh air!

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prison the two sons of their sheikh, Methkúr—his hostages at Bághdád—because he was several years in arrear of his customary tribute. They seized all native vessels laden with merchandise passing up and down the Tigris. All communication was interrupted between Bághdád and Busrah. Caravans were detained, and the hair of the camels shorn, it being the proper season for this process. But the Arabs, at least, had some sense of justice—the cargoes of the boats and the camels' hair were carefully laid aside, to be honourably restored to their owners as soon as matters might be satisfactorily arranged; and British property was respected.

The Khuzeyl Arabs, inhabiting the marsh lands on the west of the Euphrates, had torn down the dams which restrained the "great river" within its proper limits, and, by flooding their lands, placed themselves, for the time being, utterly beyond the power of the Turkish Government.

The wild Mádán tribes, in lower Mesopotamia, were on the point of following the example of their neighbours on either side. The Bedouin Arab, taking advantage of the general confusion, made formidable incursions into the pashalic, and plundered all parties indiscriminately, thus retaining his character as the descendant of Ishmael, and fulfilling the prediction, that "his hand will be against every man, and every man's hand against him."* The prospects of the Turks in their southern province were dark in the extreme. Strong representations were, however, made to the Porte, and resulted in the dismissal of Nedjib Pasha, the instalment of the Seraskier Abdí Pasha in his room, and the abolition of the system of farming the revenue by the substitution of a regular and liberal salary to the new governor. The change was hailed with delight throughout the whole province, and by slow

* Genesis xvi. 12.

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degrees tranquillity was restored. Nedjib Pasha shortly afterwards took his departure for Constantinople, leaving, it was said, an enormous amount of private debts unpaid, but taking with him a large sum of money. It was by his orders that Sofúk, the celebrated Shammar Arab chief, was treacherously slain, while under safe-conduct; and a host of other serious crimes could be established against him. Nevertheless, Nedjib Pasha was a politic governor; his severities being frequently well-timed, insurrection was prevented in the bud. It was only by an unexpected chain of disorders, which he had not the power to quell, that he was driven from his long dominion.

Acting in direct opposition to the orders of his superior, Abdí Pasha exhibited so much tact and good feeling during his mission with the troops into the Khuzeyl territories, that those refractory tribes were subdued without bloodshed, and returned to their allegiance. This circumstance had such weight with the Porte, that he was considered the fittest person to succeed Nedjib Pasha. He was, however, soon found wanting in those qualities which constitute a good governor. As a soldier, he had performed his part admirably; but no sooner did he assume the civil power than his firmness forsook him. Resigning himself to the luxury of his new position, he submitted to be guided by a favourite eunuch—a sort of buffoon whose gross gestures and language were unendurable by Europeans. The sagacious Arabs were not long in discovering that they might act almost as they pleased; and they did not fail soon afterwards to take advantage of the circumstance.

Such was the state of affairs at the end of summer in the pashalic of Bághdád, when, as soon as the intensity of the heat permitted, Colonel Williams determined to relieve the monotony and lassitude attendant on our long detention by carrying out a contemplated trip to the

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ruins of Babylon, and to the celebrated Persian shrines. Our arrangements being effected, and the day fixed for departure, we quitted our wearisome abode at Gherára, crossed the ferry over the Tigris by starlight, and at Khán-í-Zá'ad were joined by the Russian and Turkish parties, who had expressed a desire to accompany us.

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CHAPTER II.

Bághdád to Babylon—The Khán—Canals and Ancient Fertility—Shapeless Mounds—Fulfilment of Prophecy.

THE distance between Bághdád and the ruins of Babylon is about fifty miles, across a barren desert tract. Large kháns occur at convenient intervals, to provide for the security of travellers against the roving Bedouins who at times scour the surrounding country. A description of one of these kháns will suffice. It is a large and substantial square building, in the distance resembling a fortress, being surrounded with a lofty wall, and flanked by round towers to defend the inmates in case of attack. Passing through a strong gateway, the guest enters a large court, the sides of which are divided into numerous arched compartments, open in front, for the accommodation of separate parties, and for the reception of goods. In the centre is a spacious raised platform, used for sleeping upon at night, or for the devotions of the faithful during the day. Between the outer wall and the compartments are wide-vaulted arcades, extending round the entire building, where the beasts of burden are placed. Upon the roof of the arcades is an excellent terrace, and, over the gateway, an elevated tower containing two rooms—one of which is open at the sides, permitting the occupants to enjoy every breath of air that passes across the heated plain. The terrace is tolerably clean; but the court and stabling below are ankle deep in chopped straw and filth. Each

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khán is supplied with a well, dug through the gravel into the gypsiferous deposits beneath, invariably affording bad, brackish water, which tastes, as one of our party aptly described it, like a solution of leather! During the long summer, these kháns are frequently crowded to excess by pilgrims from Persia on their way to the shrines. Each caravan brings with it numbers of felt-covered coffins, containing dead bodies sent for burial in the sacred cemeteries. As pilgrims, coffins, and animals are shut up together all night—or all day, as the case may be—within the kháns, it may be conceived that the atmosphere, impregnated with noxious gases, deals death and destruction around. It is estimated that, in healthy seasons, a fifth of the travellers, overcome with fever and other diseases, find their graves in the desert; while, in times of cholera and epidemics, the average is much larger of those who fail to return to their distant homes.

In former days the vast plains of Babylonia were nourished by a complicated system of canals and water-courses, which spread over the surface of the country like net-work. The wants of a teeming population were supplied by a rich soil, not less bountiful than that on the banks of the Egyptian Nile. Like islands, rising from a golden sea of waving corn, stood frequent groves of palms and pleasant gardens, affording to the idler or the traveller their grateful and highly-valued shade. Crowds of passengers hurried along the dusty roads to and from the busy city. The land was rich in corn and wine. How changed is the aspect of that region at the present day! Long lines of mounds, it is true, mark the courses of those main arteries which formerly diffused life and vegetation along their banks, but their channels are now bereft of moisture and choked with drifted sand; the smaller offshoots are wholly effaced. "A drought is upon her waters," says the prophet, "and they shall be dried

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up."* All that remains of that ancient civilization—that "glory of kingdoms," "the praise of the whole earth"—is recognizable in the numerous mouldering heaps of brick and rubbish which overspread the surface of the plain. Instead of the luxuriant fields, the groves and gardens, nothing now meets the eye but an arid waste—the dense population of former times is vanished, and no man dwells there. Instead of the hum of many voices, silence reigns profound, except when a few passing travellers or roving Arabs flit across the scene. Destruction has swept the land, and the hand of man been made the instrument by which God has effected his punishment.† But for the curse upon it, there is no physical reason why it should not be as bountiful and thickly inhabited as in days of yore; a little care and labour bestowed on the ancient canals would again restore the fertility and population which it originally possessed. It would require no immense expenditure of funds to clear the channels of the loose sands, which have accumulated during so many centuries, and to render them navigable for the shallow vessels of the country. Such a work of supererogation is not, however, to be expected from the existing race of Turkish officials, and must be left until the time when the curse upon it shall be removed, and European civilization, with its concomitant advantages, shall penetrate into those distant wilds. May that time soon arrive!

I have been led into this digression by the fact that the Náhr Málka, one of the four main arteries which sup-

* Jer. l. 38.

† In a review of "Johnston's Physical Geography," contained in the *Edinburgh Magazine* for April 1849, the writer has well remarked that "war and barrenness of soil are not the chief obstacles to population. Insecurity of property implied in tyrannical governments is the great depopulator. Men will not labour when they cannot be certain of the fruits of their labour; they sink into lassitude, indolence, and beggary." This is a true picture of the present state of Turkey, and more especially applicable to Babylonia, which has passed through so many vicissitudes.

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plied Babylonia with the waters of the Euphrates, passed close to Khán-í-Zá'ad, and is still traceable by a slight depression. It should be remarked, that the beds of navigable canals are below the level of the surrounding country, while those of the secondary or irrigating canals are above that level. This arises from the comparatively shallow depth of the latter, and the rapid accumulation of matter held in suspension by the water, which, on deposition, raises their channels each successive year. Now and then the beds of canals in action at the present day are cleaned out, and the deposit, forming embankments at the sides, prevents the flooding of the cultivated land.

Between Khán-í-Zá'ad and the little village of Mohá wil there is nothing to interest the traveller, but soon after passing the date-trees and modern canal of the latter place, a small mound affords from its summit the first glimpse of the ruins of Babylon. Truly said the prophet concerning her, "Babylon shall become heaps, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant." * Unsightly mounds alone remain of that magnificence which Scripture so frequently dilates upon, and which the pages of Herodotus so carefully describe. Who can recognise in those shapeless piles, exposed to the ravages of time and the destructive hand of man during twenty centuries, any of its former grandeur?

We learn from Herodotus† that the great city was built in the form of a square, each side of which was defended by an enormous wall, measuring 120 stadia, or about 15 miles in length, and furnished with twenty-five gates of brass; the interior being arranged in squares by streets intersecting each other at right angles. The Euphrates divided the city into two parts, which were connected by a bridge of immense length and width.

* Jer. li. 37. † Lib. i. c. 178, *et seq.*

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According to Diodorus Siculus,* a palace stood at either extremity of the bridge: that on the eastern side measuring $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles in circumference—that on the western being $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles. He also speaks of the temple of Belus on the latter side. Herodotus, however, mentions but one palace and the temple of Belus.

The ruins at present existing stand upon the eastern bank of the Euphrates, and are enclosed within an irregular triangle formed by two lines of ramparts and the river, the area being about eight miles. This space contains three great masses of building—the high pile of unbaked brickwork called by Rich† "Mújellibe," but which is known to the Arabs as "Bábel;" the building denominated the "Kasr," or palace; and a lofty mound upon which stands the modern tomb of Amrám-ibn-'Alí. Upon the western bank of the Euphrates are a few traces of ruins, but none of sufficient importance to give the impression of a palace. It will therefore be seen that the ancient and modern descriptions of Babylon do not agree, unless we are to consider the mounds within the triangular space above-mentioned as constituting a single palace and its offices. If so, where are we to look for the walls of Babylon fifteen miles square? It has been suggested, that, by regarding the great tower of the Bírs Nimrúd on the south, and the conical mound of El Heimar on the east, as two corners of a vast square, we should thus get over the difficulty; but unfortunately we have no evidence of the existence of any walls around the square thus traced.

There are various causes to account for the complete disappearance of the walls and so much of the buildings. Upwards of 2300 years ago, Darius, the son of Hystaspes,‡ caused them to be demolished in consequence of a rebellion in the city, thus bringing about the fulfilling of the prophecy—"The wall of Babylon shall fall;" "her walls are

* Lib. ii. c. 8. † "Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon." ‡ Herod. iii. 150.

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thrown down;" "the broad walls . . . . shall be utterly broken."* During that period, likewise, the ruins were used as a never-failing brick field—city after city was built from its materials. Ctesiphon, Kúfa, Kerbella, Hillah, Bághdád, and numerous other places—themselves now scarcely to be recognized—derived their supply of bricks from Babylon! The floods of the Euphrates and the rains of winter, too, have exercised their share in burying and disintegrating the materials. All these agencies at work have combined to render Babylon a byword and a reproach among nations. Rich, and, but recently, Fresnel and Layard, endeavoured by excavation to recover some information from the existing mounds, but they encountered such inextricable confusion that they gave up their several attempts in despair.

In my opinion—and I have examined the ruins on four several occasions—it is now utterly impossible to recognize one single point in them as the remains of any of those sumptuous palaces described by the early historians. Rich,† whose account and measurements are models of careful examination, has misled himself and others by his enthusiasm in endeavouring to identify certain of the ruins with the descriptions of Herodotus. I grant that it is a most pleasing subject to speculate upon, but it is perfectly hopeless, at this distance of time, to trace out any plan of the ancient city as it existed in its greatness and glory.‡ It must not be inferred from these remarks that any doubt exists as to the identity of the ruins in question with those of the scriptural Babylon. There cannot be two opinions on that subject. Independently of the

* Jeremiah li. 44, 58; l. 15. † "Memoir on the Ruins of Babylon."

‡ In 1854–55 a minute survey of Babylon and its environs was made at the request of Sir Henry Rawlinson, by Captain Jones, I.N., assisted by Dr Hyslop and Mr T. K. Loftus. The public will doubtless ere long be put in possession of the important information which, it is said, was obtained during the progress of this examination.

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fact that universal tradition points to this locality as the seat of the Babylonian capital, no other site can be so appropriately determined on.

During Mr Layard's excavations at Babylon in the winter of 1850, Bábel, the northern mound, was investigated;* but he failed to make any discovery of importance beneath the square mass of unbaked brickwork except a few piers and walls of more solid structure. According to the measurement of Rich, it is nearly 200 yards square, and 141 feet high. It may be suggested that it was the basement upon which stood the citadel. From its summit is obtained the best view of the other ruins. On the south is the large mound of Mújellibe, so called from its "overturned" condition. The fragment of ancient brick masonry called the Kasr, which remains standing on its surface, owes its preservation to the difficulty experienced in its destruction. The bricks, strongly fixed in fine cement, resist all attempts to separate the several layers. Their under sides are generally deeply stamped with the legend of Nebuchadnezzar. Not far from this edifice is the well-known block of basalt, roughly cut to represent a lion standing over a prostrate human figure. This, together with a fragment of frieze, are the only instances of *bas reliefs* hitherto discovered in the ruins. The last, discovered by Mr Layard, exhibits two figures of deities, with head-dresses resembling those peculiar to Persepolis and Khorsabád.

On the south of the Mújellibe is the mound of Amrám, from which Mr Layard obtained the remarkable series of terra-cotta bowls, with inscriptions in ancient Chaldæan characters, supposed to have been charms used by the Jews during the captivity to ward off the Evil One. These are among the most interesting relics procured from Babylon.

* "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 504–5.

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Various ranges of smaller mounds fill up the intervening space to the eastern angle of the walls. The pyramidal mass of El Heimar, far distant in the same direction—and the still more extraordinary pile of the Bírs Nimrúd in the south-west, across the Euphrates—rise from the surrounding plain like two mighty tumuli designed to mark the end of departed greatness. Midway between them, the river Euphrates, wending her silent course towards the sea, is lost amid the extensive date-groves which conceal from sight the little Arab town of Hillah. All else around is a blank waste, recalling the words of Jeremiah :—" Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby." *

It would be useless here to enter into a more detailed description of the ruins, because the works of Rich and Layard yield all the information which is known on the subject, and to them my readers must be referred.

* Jeremiah li. 43.

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CHAPTER III.

Hillah—Táhir Bey and the Turkish Brass Band—The Oven Dance—Martial Escort—Bridge of Boats—Bírs Nimrúd—Its true Theory—Sir H. Rawlinson's Discoveries—The Seven-coloured Walls of the Temple of the Spheres—Chaldee Astronomy.

THE camp of our party was pitched on the southern extremity of the mounds, near the village of Júmjúmá, where we were joined by Táhir Bey, the military governor of Hillah, one of the very few men in Turkey who have devoted their time to study the profession of a soldier. He was known as a dashing officer, and possessed that frankness and off-hand manner which stamped the correctness of the character he had obtained. He was a general favourite, and soon made himself at home with us. He placed a guard of fifty men to look after our safety during the night; and, to afford some amusement, ordered out the brass band of the garrison under his command, which at intervals enlivened us with selections and remarkable variations from Bellini, Donizetti, and even Strauss! This, as may be imagined, was not quite consonant to the feelings of the European portion of the assembly, who would infinitely rather have dispensed with such frivolities, and have indulged in quiet contemplation on the extraordinary scene which we had that day for the first time beheld. But, as there was no help for it, we were obliged to conform to the feelings of the majority, and to respect the attentions which Táhir Bey lavished upon us.

At such times as the band ceased its somewhat dubi-

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ous melody, one of those never-failing accompaniments of Oriental fêtes—a dancer—was introduced to add to the amusement of the evening. He proved to be no ordinary buffoon, such as usually exhibits to an Eastern audience. Hamza of Hillah was celebrated far and near for his grace and modesty. He might have been about eighteen years old, and was not only dressed, but appeared like a girl, tall and slightly built. His costume resembled that of a Spanish dancer, consisting of a tight vest with loose sleeves of red silk, and a skirt of the same material, which reached to below the knees, and was ornamented with alternate rings or flounces of red, blue, and yellow, edged with Persian shawl. This skirt was called "tennúr," from its resemblance to an Arab "oven." On his head was a fez, with long, full blue tassel; and from his neck and breast hung numerous chains and large medals of silver—presents, doubtless, from his ardent admirers. The backs of his hands were adorned with silver studs, and his fingers with rings, of which he made the most dexterous use as an accompaniment to the sound of the tomtom. Oriental dances are usually gross and indecent in the extreme: it was therefore with no little surprise and pleasure that we remarked Hamza's movements were entirely free from this objection, and might have been witnessed by the most fastidious. His grace would indeed have amused, if not charmed, any audience, and, if exhibited in England, he would soon have made his fortune. There not being space sufficient in the reception-tent for the full display of Hamza's powers, an adjournment took place to the open air. A large circle was formed around a torch adapted for the occasion. It was a round iron grate, raised upon a pole to the height of six feet from the ground. The fire was fed with the boughs and leaves of date-trees, which cast a strong lurid light upon the spectators.

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The people of Hillah, hearing of our arrival, and judging that there was something to be seen, collected in considerable numbers into a motley group. There was the old Turk, chibúk in hand, with his venerable white beard, well-wound turban, and scrupulously clean person and apparel—the dirty Arab, with his gay keffíeh, striped abba, and constant companion, the long spear—the nearly naked water-carrier, bearing a huge bullock's skin upon his broad back, and announcing his ever-welcome presence by the sound of little brass bells—here and there a stray Persian, in pointed lambskin cap and long blue robes, as worn ages past by his forefathers—and lastly, our own attendants, exhibiting every variety of race, caste, and costume between Malta and Bághdád—a complete Bábel among themselves. Turkish sentinels at regular intervals, musket in hand, kept the ring.

Hamza now stepped into the circle and commenced the performance of what was esteemed his most wonderful feat—the favourite of the Turks. He began, dervish-like, to move slowly round upon one spot, gradually increasing his speed as the music quickened, until at length he spun round with amazing velocity. He then proceeded to partially divest himself of his numerous ornaments and garments, but each article was taken off so slowly and carefully, and the speed with which he turned was so great, that, when he rapidly passed it into the hands of a person stationed to receive it, the movement was scarcely perceptible. Each portion of his dress thus disappeared until only his under-clothing remained. Throwing a shawl over his person, he now actually increased his speed to a fearful velocity, until he appeared as though fixed on a pivot. He then dressed; and, after half an hour of this violent exertion, suddenly ceasing his gyrations, he made two or three elegant movements, salaamed the strangers, and retired amidst shouts of applause. Although not

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exhibiting the grace of his dance in the tent, as an example of bodily endurance it surpassed anything of the sort I had ever before witnessed.

This exhibition over, and the din of the tomtom ceased, a profound stillness took possession of the camp, varied only by the regular tread and challenge of the sentinel. It was long, however, before I closed my eyes. The excitement of visiting a spot so remarkable in the history of the human race was such, that I lay awake for a length of time, recalling to my mind all the wonderful events which had befallen "the golden city," and the astounding fulfilment of those prophecies which refer in so remarkable a manner to its present crumbling condition. No one who reflects seriously on such a subject and on such a scene can fail to be impressed with the truth of Scripture.

The whole camp was early astir on the following morning, and we proceeded in great state towards Hillah, the little capital of the surrounding Arab district. The procession was led by the mounted escort which had accompanied us from Bághdád, and by the detachment of infantry sent from the town overnight by Táhir Bey. I must give them the credit of being by far the cleanest, most orderly, and soldier-like fellows I had seen in Turkey—vastly superior to the ill-clad wretches who hung about the streets of Stambúl before the war. Their dress and accoutrements were good and clean, their muskets and long bayonets shining as brightly as any rigid disciplinarian could desire. The only thing which detracted from their appearance, and rendered them somewhat uncouth to look upon, was, that their European-cut white trousers were inconveniently small to contain the Oriental baggy drawers within. Next in order were three led horses of the pasha, covered with black trappings, and ornamented with plates and beads of bright silver,

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having much the appearance of palls appertaining to a funeral procession. Behind these were two kettle-drummers, who kept up an incessant tomtomming until the ears ached with the intolerable din—these, of course, immediately preceded the three commissioners and a motley group of officers, in such costumes as each thought most suitable for affording shelter against the increasing heat of the rising sun. In the background came servants of all classes, exhibiting as picturesque an array as can be well conceived. Long strings of mules with the baggage closed the procession.

Hillah is approached from the Bághdád road, by a narrow avenue, passing through the extensive date-gardens which border on the river. The trampling of so many feet enveloped us in a cloud of the finest and most penetrating dust, which all were compelled to endure while almost suffocated by it. At the suburbs we were received by our friend the governor, who had preceded us, by the band, and the bulk of the garrison. Although the dust was very annoying, it was impossible not to enjoy a scene so strange and new. The sun was just beginning to shed his warming influence upon the beautiful yellow clusters of ripening dates, which hung like so many bunches of pure gold collected round the ends of the tall stems. The luxuriant tufts of feathery branches, and their elegantly pendent form, appeared to spring from the trees, as if solely intended to relieve the monotonous aspect of an Arab desert, or to prevent the fruit under their bounteous shade from being scorched and dried up under the vertical sun.

A few dilapidated houses and a small bazaar, chiefly stocked with water-melons and cucumbers, guard the eastern approach to the bridge of Hillah. The crossing this bridge—if it could deserve the title—produced considerable wavering and consternation among the horsemen; many of whom, it was observed, wisely dismounted,

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lest a false step or other accident should precipitate both horse and rider into the rapid Euphrates. The bridge was one of boats—infirm and old—covered, like Noah's ark, "without with pitch" derived from the bitumen springs of Hit. From boat to boat was laid down a roadway of date timber; but so full of holes was it, that a broad-stepped ladder would have answered the same purpose. The oscillation produced by the passage of so many horsemen, the plunging and kicking of the animals, and the state of the bridge itself, rendered it a matter of no small difficulty to reach the opposite bank of the river in safety. As if for the sake of amusing themselves at our expense, and to create as much confusion as possible, the authorities in the town placed two large guns in such a position as to enfilade both sides of the bridge, and fired a succession of salutes—sufficient to have done honour to three sultans, instead of three commissioners! Having escaped all the dangers consequent on the passage of the Euphrates, we assembled at the seráy, where pipes and coffee were duly provided, and a few minutes' rest was allowed us to collect our scattered thoughts. The seráy is said to have been a palace of the khálífs; and certainly, if its dilapidated condition be any warrant for this report, its antiquity is undoubted. There is nothing remarkable about the town of Hillah, except that, from its situation on the Euphrates, it is somewhat more picturesque than most Arab towns. The bazaars are extensive, and exhibit the usual amount of blindness, poverty, and filth. If there be one thing more than another which strikes the visitor to Hillah, it is the large number of Jews who inhabit the place, and secure a livelihood by collecting and selling antiques from the neighbouring mounds. They are the degraded and persecuted remnant of the ten thousand, whom Nebuchadnezzar carried off from Jerusalem, still hovering around the scene of the captivity!

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It has been often suggested, that, in consequence of the frequent changes in the course of the Euphrates, the western portion of Babylon was gradually washed away, and that its place is now occupied by the alluvial plain. Mr Layard is of this opinion.* But this mode of accounting for the entire disappearance of such large edifices as we know, from the historical accounts, to have existed on the west of the great river, is highly unsatisfactory. Upon the same supposition, we should expect the eastern ruins to have likewise disappeared. The opposition offered by such a massive pile as Bábel or Mújellibe could not be wholly overcome, even during a lapse of centuries. The result of the river's flowing at its base would simply be the disintegration of a very small portion of its mass. The surface of the ground between Hillah and the Bírs Nimrúd, a distance of six miles, shews the remains of old canals derived from near the present course of the Euphrates, which is quite opposed to this theory. It is more probable, in my opinion, that the river has not much altered its channel, but that the western division of the ruins, being more accessible to brick-hunters, was completely demolished. It appears, however, to have escaped general observation, that there are mounds within the date-groves of Hillah itself indicating the existence of older foundations. These may eventually prove to be a portion of the lost western half of ancient Babylon.

There are few ruins in the world which have excited such general interest and speculation regarding their object and origin as the vitrified brick edifice which crowns the summit of Bírs Nimrúd. The old Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, in the twelfth century, regarded it with devout reverence as part of the identical tower of Bábel destroyed by fire when the Lord scattered man abroad upon the face of the earth as a punishment for his auda-

* "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 492–3.

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city. Many authors consider it to be the great temple of Belus, described by Herodotus as having been partially destroyed by Darius, about 500 B.C., and afterwards plundered by his son Xerxes. Others, again, were inclined to look on it as an observatory erected by the Chaldæan priests for astronomical purposes.

It is, however, to the sagacity and learning of Sir Henry Rawlinson that we are indebted for a correct determination of this remarkable edifice. The excavations conducted there under his directions, in 1854, confirm the correctness of the observations made by Rich, Ker Porter, and Buckingham, as to the existence of several stages which they conceived to be visible under the accumulation of fallen bricks. Sir Henry Rawlinson ascertained that the structure consisted of six distinct platforms or terraces. Each terrace was about 20 feet in height, and 42 feet less horizontally than the one below it. The whole were so arranged as to constitute an oblique pyramid—the terraces in front being 30 feet in depth, while those behind were 12 feet, and at the sides 21 feet each. Upon the sixth story stands the vitrified mass, concerning which such discussion has arisen, and which, it is now suggested, was the sanctum of the temple. Built into the corners of the stories were cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar, designating the whole structure, "the Stages of the Seven Spheres of Borsippa." Each story was dedicated to a planet, and stained with the colour peculiarly attributed to it in the works of the Sabæan astrologers, and traditionally handed down to us from the Chaldæans. The lowest stage was coloured black, in honour of Saturn; the second orange, for Jupiter; the third red, for Mars; the fourth yellow, for the Sun; the fifth green, for Venus; the sixth blue, for Mercury; and the temple was probably white, for the Moon!

It may not perhaps prove unacceptable to my readers

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if I here give Sir Henry Rawlinson's translation from the cuneiform record upon the cylinders, which is to the following effect :—

"I am Nabu-kuduri-uzur, King of Babylon, the established governor, he who pays homage to Merodach, adorer of the Gods, glorifier of Nabu, the supreme chief, he who cultivates worship in honour of the Great Gods, the subduer of the disobedient man, repairer of the temples of Bit-Shaggeth and Bit-Tzida, the eldest son of Nabu-pal-uzur, King of Babylon. Behold now Merodach, my great Lord, has established men of strength and has urged me to repair his buildings. Nabu, the guardian over the heavens and the earth, has committed to my hands the sceptre of royalty therefore. Bit-Shaggeth, the palace of the heavens and the earth for Merodach the supreme chief of the Gods, and Bit Kua, the shrine of his divinity, and adorned with shining gold, I have appointed them. Bit-Tzida also I have firmly built. With silver and gold and a facing of stone ; with wood of fir, and plane, and pine I have completed it. The building named the Planisphere, which was the wonder of Babylon, I have made and finished. With bricks enriched with lapis lazuli I have exalted its head. Behold now the building named the Stages of the Seven Spheres, which was the wonder of Borsippa, had been built by a former king. He had completed 42 cubits (of height), but he did not finish its head. From the lapse of time it had become ruined ; they had not taken care of the exits of the waters, so the rain and wet had penetrated into the brickwork. The casing of burnt brick had bulged out, and the terraces of crude brick lay scattered in heaps ; then Merodach, my great Lord, inclined my heart to repair the building. I did not change its site, nor did I destroy its foundation platform, but in a fortunate month, and upon an auspicious day, I undertook the building of the crude brick terraces, and the

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burnt brick casing of the temple. I strengthened its foundation, and I placed a titular record on the part I had rebuilt. I set my hand to build it up and to exalt its summit. As it had been in ancient times, so I built up its structure; as it had been in former days, thus I exalted its head. Nabu, the strengthener of his children, he who ministers to the Gods, and Merodach, the supporter of sovereignty, may they cause this my work to be established for ever; may it last through the seven ages, and may the stability of my throne and the antiquity of my empire, secure against strangers, and triumphant over many foes, continue to the end of time. Under the guardianship of the Regent who presides over the spheres of heaven and the earth, may the length of my days pass on in due course. I invoke Merodach, the king of the heavens and the earth, that this my work may be preserved for me under thy care in honour and respect. May Nabu-kuduri-uzur, the royal architect, remain under thy protection."

The record further states, that "Nabu-kuduri-uzur's" restoration took place 504 years after the original foundation by Tiglath Pileser I., who dates as far back as 1100 B.C.

Antiquarians had long previously pronounced the Birs Nimrúd to be Borsippa, the city to which Alexander the Great retired when warned by the Chaldæan priests not to enter Babylon from the east. Every brick hitherto obtained from the ruin is impressed with the legend of Nebuchadnezzar. The attempted identification with the tower of Bábel therefore falls to the ground, unless it shall be hereafter shewn that the temple restored by Nebuchadnezzar was erected upon the site of a still earlier structure.*

* Nebuchadnezzar was a great builder and restorer. His records are discovered in every part of Babylonia, and abound in the immediate vicinity of Babylon—corroborating to the fullest extent the words of Scripture: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built?" &c.—Dan. iv. 30.

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The peculiarities displayed in the architecture of the Bírs Nimrúd agree so faithfully with the Greek descriptions of the temple of Belus at Babylon, that there can be no doubt of the two buildings having been erected on the same general plan, and that, when we look upon the existing edifice, we regard a fac-simile of the one which is now destroyed.

As a discovery in art or science always leads to further knowledge and information, so the seven coloured stories of the Temple of the Spheres enable us fully to comprehend the hitherto dubious account of the seven coloured walls of the city Ecbatana in Media, described by Herodotus.* As regards the mode in which the colours of the bricks in each stage were produced, it may be suggested that chemical ingredients were added to the clay before the bricks were burned in the furnace. It is more difficult to explain the cause of the vitrification of the upper building. My late talented friend, Captain Newbold, assistant-resident in the Deccan, originated an idea when we examined the Bírs Nimrúd in company, which is, I believe, now beginning to be adopted, that, in order to render their edifices more durable, the Babylonians submitted them, when erected, to the heat of a furnace. This will account for the remarkable condition of the brickwork on the summit of the Bírs Nimrúd, which has undoubtedly been subjected to the agency of fire. No wonder that the early explorers, carried away by their feelings of reverence, should have ascribed the vitrified and molten aspect of the ruins to the avenging fire of heaven, instead of to a more natural agency. It is worthy of notice, that in several places where vitrified bricks occur in Babylonia, they are associated with a tradition that Nimrod there threw the patriarch Abra-

* Lib. i. 98.

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ham into a furnace. There appear, therefore, to be some grounds for Captain Newbold's suggestion.

The Bírs Nimrúd, then, was a temple dedicated to the heavenly bodies, where "the wise men of the Chaldees," prompted by their adoration of the countless orbs, were naturally led to the study of astronomy. The Chaldæans were the first people who reduced their observations to a regular system. On the authority of Berosus,* it is recorded, that when Alexander took Babylon, Callisthenes forwarded to his relative Aristotle in Greece a catalogue of eclipses which had been observed at Babylon during the previous 1903 years. Ptolemy refers to eclipses in the year 720 B.C., which were derived from a Chaldæan source. It is to those early astronomers we are indebted for the zodiac and the duodecimal division of the day.

The expansive plains of Babylonia possess such natural advantages for the study of astronomy, that we cannot wonder at their having become the birth-place of that science. The remarkable dryness and regularity of the climate, the serenity of the sky, and the transparency of the atmosphere, particularly point to that region as admirably adapted for studies and investigations of this nature. Constellations of the eighth magnitude are distinctly visible to the naked eye, while between May and November meteors fall in countless numbers. Under these circumstances, when observatories are being established in various less favourable localities, it appears not a little strange that "the land of the Chaldees" is passed over in utter forgetfulness. With the appliances and correctly-adjusted instruments which the march of civilization has produced, what additions to our knowledge of astronomy and meteorology might we not attain by erecting an observatory at such a spot as Bághdád or Babylon!

* Consult Porphyr., *apud* Simplic, i. 2; also, Pliny, vii. 57.

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CHAPTER IV.

View from Bírs Nimrúd—Keffil—Ezekiel's Tomb—Children of the Captivity.

THE view from the summit of the Bírs Nimrúd is very extensive, and its utter desolation has been the theme of frequent observation. No one can stand there and survey the scene around without being struck with the literal fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy—"I will make it a possession for the bittern, and pools of water; and I will sweep it with the besom of destruction, saith the Lord of hosts."* Spreading out like a vast sea upon the north and west is a marsh, which all the labours of the ancient and modern rulers of the country have never been able to subdue. In certain seasons, the waters of the Euphrates rise above their ordinary level, and flood the whole surface of the low lands of Chaldæa, confirming every word of the prophet.

Bordering upon this marsh, a few spots attract the eye and relieve the long level of the horizon. Due south stands the little tomb of the prophet Ezekiel, and at the distance of fifty miles, in the mirage of early morning, may be discerned the mosque of the sainted 'Alí, glistening like a speck of gold as the beams of the rising sun play upon its surface. Nearer at hand, on the north-west, are the twin domes of Kerbella, the burial-place of 'Alí's slaughtered sons. The edge and islands of the

* Isaiah xiv. 23.

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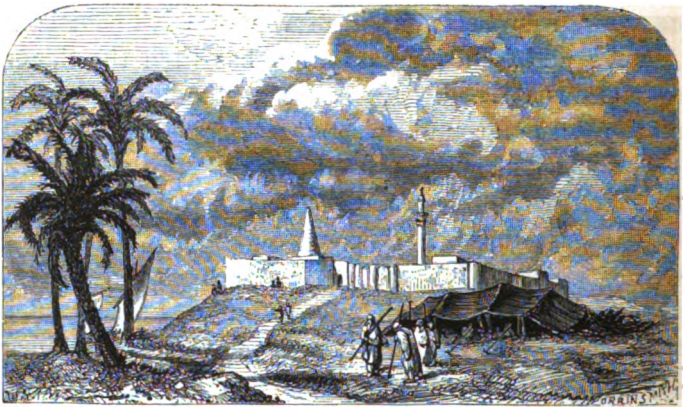
marsh are at times dotted with encampments of Khuzeyl Arabs; and with the telescope may be distinguished their numerous flocks of sheep and camels, while the hum of busy voices can be distinctly heard a distance of full six miles across the waters.

From the Bírs Nimrúd southwards, a road runs along the raised bank, which here in a measure restrains the marsh within bounds. A succession of large canal courses, now dry, are crossed during a ride of twelve miles to the little town of Keffil, which, from its want of



Keffil, and the Tomb of the Prophet Ezekiel.

luxuriant trees and vegetation, looks dull and sombre in the extreme—a fitting place for the sepulchre of a captive prophet in a strange land. There have been trees at some time or other, as a few stunted palms bear witness; but, like the town itself, they have witnessed more flourishing times. They are ludicrous specimens of their race, and stand with their branches projecting straight upwards into the air, giving them the appearance of gigantic brooms. The town of Keffil is protected by a high wall, and defended at intervals by small towers. An old broken-down mosque, with minaret to match, stooping

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to its fall—the spire of the prophet Ezekiel's tomb—and the tops of the houses peeping above—are all that invite further approach. Except when a crowd of pilgrims collect at the annual festival, the exterior of the place is deserted.

The spire of the sacred tomb is the frustum of an elongated cone, tapering to a blunted top by a succession of divisions or steps, cut and embellished in a peculiar manner. Similar spires frequently occur upon tombs throughout the East, where, as is well known, forms and customs alter but little. I am therefore inclined to regard the spire of the Arab tomb as analogous to the fir cone so repeatedly represented on the bas-reliefs at Nineveh. The eagle-headed and other figures of the sculptures appear to present the *cone of Indian corn*—an emblem of the first-fruits of the earth—as an offering to the Deity in the form of the sacred tree. May not the spire of the modern tomb have some similar symbolical meaning attached to it?

There is no reason to believe that the tradition is unworthy of credence, which assigns to Keffil the honour of possessing the bones of the prophet Ezekiel. The continued residence of the Jews in the land where their forefathers were consigned in exile, and the respect with which the tomb has for so many centuries been regarded, not only by the Jews themselves, but by the Mohammedans, ought to be considered a sufficient guarantee for the correctness of the tradition. The Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, in the middle of the twelfth century, tells us, that "the monument was covered by a large cupola, and the building was very handsome. It was erected by Jeconiah, King of Judah, and the 35,000 Jews who accompanied him." Of course, the edifice of the Jewish monarch, if such ever existed, has long since fallen to ruin, and the present edifice is comparatively modern.

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It is remarkably plain, both externally and internally, containing two vaulted apartments—the roof of the outer one being supported by heavy columns. The sepulchre is cased in a large wooden box of considerable age, which measures ten feet long by four feet high. Its decoration consists of a piece of English chintz and small red and green flags. The chamber itself is square, the side walls being extremely dirty and greased with oil. The floor is covered with a filthy matting. The vaulted ceiling is very prettily ornamented with scrolls of gold, silver, and bronze. Built into one corner is an ancient Hebrew copy of the Pentateuch. A scanty light is admitted from above, and an ever-burning lamp sheds a solemn gloom into the sanctuary. The flat terrace or roof affords a good view of the marshes extending to the base of the little elevation upon which the town of Keffil stands. The flooring of the terrace is, however, in such a state of lamentable filth that the Jews might, with every justice, be charged with paying little or no respect to the memory of their prophet. The interior of the town, in fact, is redolent with odours none of the most agreeable.

A large proportion of the inhabitants are Jews, a host of whom, surrounding the door of the sanctuary, looked daggers as our large party, booted and spurred from the journey, crossed the sacred threshold. The Oriental Jews delight in wearing none but the very gayest colours, so that the group which we encountered contrasted strangely with the dull aspect of the place. A number of Jewish ladies, carefully veiled from the profane eyes of strangers, were also assembled on our arrival, but they had, one and all, vanished before our return from the interior of the dim tomb into the glaring light of day.

Keffil, being on the verge of the recently disturbed district, had just been the scene of some hard fighting. The

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place was held by a small garrison of Turkish troops as an advanced post. The Arabs in rebellion attacked and took it, putting the whole garrison of sixty men to the sword. On its being retaken a few days afterwards by the Turks, the bodies of the poor fellows were found still unburied and barbarously treated by their savage enemies.

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CHAPTER V.

The Marshes of Babylon—Khuzeyl Arabs—The Euphrates, and its Canals—Semiramis—Nebuchadnezzar—Cyrus—Alexander—Shûjah-ed-Dowla, and the Indian Canal.

A NIGHT spent at Keffil during the month of September, is by no means to be envied; the mosquitoes, malaria, and damp of the marshes being all but certain to lay in the seeds of fever, which is not long in appearing.

In order to reach Meshed 'Alí, it is necessary to cross the marsh. For this purpose boats are always to be procured at Keffil. They are heavy clumsy vessels, constructed of Indian teak, about 40 feet in length, with high pointed prows and sterns, and flat bottoms for enabling them to skim over the shallows. Each is guided by two nearly naked Arabs, one of whom manages the cumbrous and primitive rudder, while the other attends to a huge lug-sail—if such term can be applied to a patchwork of every shape and colour, filled with innumerable holes.

The stream flows, at the rate of four or five miles an hour, through a continuous rice-field, which is prevented from being completely overflooded by means of dams, constructed of stakes and reed matting. Sometimes, when the rise of the Euphrates exceeds its usual level, the country is a vast inundation. On such occasions, whole families of Arabs, with their frail dwellings of reeds and tents, are swept away in a single night. These calamities are but too frequent. Upon a few elevated

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spots, small mud forts serve as citadels for refuge in case of inundation or attack. The Arab inhabitants of these marshes are a fine manly race, and their noble forms are particularly striking. Their half-naked and deeply-bronzed bodies, nourished by scanty fare, shew every muscle to advantage as they propel their vessels with long poles in the shallows against the wind or stream, dexterously running along the edge of the boat. The keffieh, or head-dress, is useless among those marshes, for the long, thick, streaming hair of the Khuzeyl Arab acts as the most natural covering, and is admirably adapted for keeping off the rays of the sun.

In sailing along, every now and then we encountered a noisy party in a crowded boat, who gazed with wonder, not unmixed with alarm, upon the European fleet. All appeared life and activity around us in those fens—the men, not languidly smoking their pipes like the dwellers in cities and loungers in bazaars, but busy at their daily employments, as agriculturists should be. The women were engaged about their tents with duties not less arduous than those of the stronger sex. Notwithstanding their labour and activity, they are evidently in a wretched state of misery, and ground down by heavy exactions. The only power they possess of resisting injustice is that of flooding their marshes, but this is only temporary, for without cultivating, how are they and their families to exist during the ensuing year? There is not a more industrious race throughout the Turkish empire, and if their rulers knew but how to treat them, both would be highly benefited. Justice and security of property and person are all that is required to effect this; but knowingly, and with impunity, the Turkish authorities permit the farmers of their revenues to oppress their temporary subjects, and evince no desire to protect the labouring classes. Under an enlightened government, as I have

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previously remarked, such things could not be. In the secluded provinces, however, the rulers are less scrupulous than those nearer to the capital. The Pasha of Bághdád is, as it were, an independent prince, and his words are law. His emissaries, while carrying out his claims, seldom fail to enrich themselves, if not to the loss of the Government, at least to the oppression of the subject. No wonder, therefore, that the province is in constant disturbance, and that the Arabs are at times driven to revolt and to the commission of barbarous acts, not characteristic of their otherwise honourable and kindly nature. To those who are most conversant with the Arab character, it is well known that these sons of the desert may be guided like children by kindness and firmness.

The marshes of the Khuzeyl have played so important a part in the history of the Euphrates, from the earliest times of which we have authentic records, down to the present day, that a few remarks upon them and their connexion with "the great river" may not be uninteresting.

During the 530 miles of its course through the flat alluvial plains of Babylonia, the Euphrates does not average a greater fall than three inches in the mile,* the consequence of which is, that the low lands on either side are frequently flooded during the periodical rises of the river. In order, therefore, to check the dangerous superabundance of the water, and to distribute it advantageously for the purpose of beneficial irrigation, dikes and canals were instituted at a very early period in the history of the country, and were, in fact, essential to its very

* The Volga may be compared with the Euphrates as regards its fall. It has its origin in a small lake on the slopes of the plateau of Valdai, at an elevation of 550 feet above the level of the ocean, whence it flows in a gently inclined bed to its termination in the Caspian Sea, 83 feet below the level of the Euxine. Its entire fall, over a course of 2400 miles, therefore, amounts to only 633 feet, or to 3·16 inches per mile.

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existence.* The once fabulous Queen Semiramis,† we are told, cut two artificial canals at a considerable distance *above* Babylon, and turned the superfluous waters of the Euphrates into the Tigris, by this means obviating the damage which the city and surrounding country previously sustained from inundation. To facilitate the building of brick walls cemented with bitumen along both banks of the river, the same queen caused the whole body of the stream to be diverted by a large canal into a prodigious lake‡ forty miles square, which she caused to be dug on the west of Babylon.

In the days of Nebuchadnezzar, when Babylon was a land of traffic and "a city of merchants,"§ considerable attention was paid to the proper distribution of the waters of the great river. The primary canals of Náhr Málka and Pallacopas are attributed to that monarch. It seems probable, however, that the latter work was merely the re-opening of the canal dug by Semiramis, and its extension to the sea—thus giving two distinct branches to the Euphrates.

During the effeminate dominion of the succeeding Persian dynasty, it is inferred that little or nothing was done towards restoring the river to its natural course, so that it continued to flow into the marshes west of Borsippa, or Bírs Nimrúd, enlarging the Pallacopas opening.

* Herodotus, i. 185. Strabo, xvi. 740. Pliny, vi. 26. Diodorus Siculus, ii. 100, *et seq.* Arrian, vii. 21 : see note, p. 42.

† An inscription upon a statue of the god Nebu, discovered at Nineveh, bears the names of Phulukh and Sammuramit, leading to the supposition that the queen, represented under the Greek name of Semiramis, was the Sammuramit of the cuneiform record, the wife of the scriptural Pul (the Belochus of the Greeks), who reigned about B.C. 750. See the *Athenæum*, Nos. 1388, 1476, 1503.

‡ Herodotus, i. 184–5. This exaggerated description undoubtedly refers to the Báhr or Sea of Nedjef.

§ Ezekiel xvii. 4.

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Xenophon,* in describing the march of the Greeks to the assistance of Cyrus the Younger, along the eastern side of the Euphrates, mentions four great canals crossed by the advancing army, viz :—the Náhr-raga, the Náhr Sáres, the Náhr Málka, and the Náhr Kútha. He, of course, knew nothing of other channels on the opposite side of the river ; but if, in addition to the above, it be considered that the Pallacopas carried off a great portion of the Euphrates towards the marshes on the west, we can perfectly comprehend that which afterwards occurred.

When Alexander the Great returned from his Indian campaign, and desired to restore Babylon to her former grandeur, he found so little water passing through the city, that there was scarcely depth for small boats. He therefore determined on effectually closing the mouth of the Pallacopas—which, according to Arrian, was 800 stadia, or about 90 miles, *above* Babylon—and on digging a new canal, where the nature of the ground was favourable to his purpose. His historian says, "When he had proceeded 30 stadia (or three miles), the ground was observed to be rocky."† The passage is interpreted in

* Cycrop. i. p. 261–266.

† Arrian's account of the Pallacopas is so quaint and interesting, that I venture to give a literal translation of the passage :—

"But in the meantime, while vessels are being constructed, and a harbour dug at Babylon, Alexander was conveyed by the Euphrates from Babylon to the river Pallacopas. This is distant from Babylon about 800 stadia. Moreover, this Pallacopas is a channel cut from the Euphrates, not a river rising from springs. For the Euphrates, flowing from the mountains of Armenia, flows during the winter between banks, inasmuch as it has not much water ; but when spring sets in, and much more under the heat of summer, it increases greatly, and, overflowing its banks, inundates the plains of Assyria. For then the snows melting in the mountains of Armenia increase its waters in a wonderful manner ; and thus raised to a great height, it overwhelms the whole region adjoining, unless any person turning it aside should discharge it through the Pallacopas into the lakes and marshes —which indeed, by the entrance of this channel, even to the region neighbouring on Arabia, and from thence into stagnant places, and at length by many and unknown windings, is carried to the sea. But, when the snows

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several different ways; but I believe that it means 30 stadia *above Babylon*,* which might well refer to the modern channel called the Hindíeh—the ancient city extending to within three miles of its mouth; and it is a curious coincidence, that near that point sandstone rocks rise through the alluvium to the surface!

For twenty-one centuries, since the time of Alexander, the Euphrates has fluctuated between its original channel through Babylon and this new opening, until at length, the navigation of the latter having become interrupted, an Indian prince, named Núwáb Shújah-ed-Dowla, re-opened its channel one hundred years ago. Since that date it has been called, after him, the "Hindíeh," and has

are dissolved, especially about the setting of Vergiliæ, the Euphrates grows small; but, nevertheless, a great part of it is drained by the Pallacopas into the marshes. Unless, therefore, some one should again block up the channel of the Pallacopas, so that the water, repulsed near the banks (dams), remains in the channel, it may so greatly drain the Euphrates into it, that thus the fields of Assyria cannot be irrigated by it. Wherefore, a governor of Babylonia, with much labour, blocked up the exits of the Euphrates into the Pallacopas (although they are not opened with much difficulty); because in those parts the soil is marshy and for the most part muddy, seeing that it is well washed by the water of the river, it may allow of the less easy shutting out of the water:—so that they may have occupied more than 10,000 Assyrians three whole months at this work. When these things were told to Alexander, they incited him to meditate something to the advantage of Assyria. Therefore, at the point where the flow of the Euphrates is drained into the Pallacopas, he resolved to dam its mouth firmly up. *When he had proceeded thirty stadia*, the ground was observed to be rocky, of such kind that, if a cutting were carried to the ancient channel of the Pallacopas, the water might be prevented from overflowing by means of the firmness of the soil, and that its escape might be able to be effected without difficulty at a stated period of the year. Therefore, Alexander both sailed to the Pallacopas, and descended by it to the marshes, into the region of Arabia. There, having fixed on a certain convenient locality, he built a city, and surrounded it with walls, and conveyed to it a colony of Greek mercenaries, volunteers, and others, who, by reason of their age or any debility, had become useless in war."—ARRIAN, *De Exp. Alex.*, lib. vii. c. 21.

* Many authors place the Pallacopas and Alexander's cutting *below* Babylon, and so it is laid down upon many of our maps, but this is quite contrary to the ancient accounts.

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caused an infinity of expense and annoyance to the pashas of Bághdád.

The mouth of this interesting canal is situated about two miles below the khán at Músseib, and about sixteen miles above the commencement of the existing ruins of Babylon, at a point where the natural channel of the Euphrates makes a slight eastern bend. When greatly flooded, the violence of the stream frequently breaks down the artificial barriers erected to regulate the influx of water, and enlarges the entrance of the Hindíeh. Immense sums of money are expended by the Turkish Government in rebuilding, repairing, and strengthening the dam, because the river has a tendency to quit the Babylon channel, and to flow westward into the marshes, as in the days of Alexander. The natural effect is to deprive the eastern side of the Euphrates of its due irrigation, by reducing all the canals below the point of bifurcation; the villages become deserted, and the fields uncultivated. On the western side, the rice-grounds of the Khuzeyl Arabs are overflowed, and cultivation is entirely out of the question. The chief revenues of Bághdád being derived from these regions, it is of the utmost importance that the equilibrium of the two branches of the Euphrates should be properly cared for.

Soon after the accession of Abdí Pasha to the government of the province, like all his predecessors, his attention was directed to this subject. The force of the stream, caused by the extraordinary rise of the river, had carried away every trace of the former dams, and enlarged the mouth of the Hindíeh to such an extent, that the Euphrates bid fair to disappear into the western marshes. He therefore cut a new channel, 120 feet broad, at a short distance above the bifurcation, which relieved the pressure, and enabled him to effect the building of a new and strong dam of osiers, reeds, and earth, at the mouth

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of the Hindíeh, while the quantity of water admitted into the new cut was regulated by two solid brick piers, with sluice-gates eighty feet wide.

Notwithstanding all this expense and trouble, the river in 1854 overcame all obstacles, and once more regained possession of the marshes. Flowing southwards a few miles, a deep stream, 180 feet wide, with banks 10 or 20 feet high, the Hindíeh enters and is lost in the great inundation, extending on the north and west of the Bírs Nimrúd, passes Keffil and the ruins of Kúfa, and ultimately debouches into the great inland freshwater sea of Nedjef.

No modern traveller has yet succeeded in following the entire course of the ancient Pallacopas, but traces of its channel are still visible on the east of the town of Nedjef.*

The great sheet of water, the Báhr-í-Nedjef, extends forty miles in a south-easterly direction, and at its southern extremity gives out two considerable streams, Shat-el-Khúzíf and Shat-el-Atchán, which subsequently unite, and are known by the latter name. Further to the south, five large bodies of water have their origin from the Atchán, and, uniting, constitute the Húrán. This, after flowing about thirty miles, eventually joins the Atchán, and the two rivers form what is called the Western or Semáva branch of the Euphrates. All the above branches are navigable when the mouth of the Hindíeh is open, and it is by them that merchandise is conveyed from Busrah to Hillah. When the great annual rise of the Euphrates

* The marshes between the mouth of the Hindíeh and the Báhr-í-Nedjef were first surveyed by Mr T. K. Lynch of Bághdád, who there frequently met with the banks of an ancient canal—the Náhr-Algam—which may be the veritable channel of the Pallacopas. This gentleman communicated an interesting memoir on his researches to the Royal Geographical Society. The region has been since examined in more detail during the survey of the environs of Babylon by Captain Jones, I.N.

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occurs, the whole region, from the Báhr-í-Nedjef to Semáva, is one continuous inundation, called the "Khor Ullah," or, Marshes of God.* Here and there it is dotted with thousands of small islands, separated from each other by an infinity of streamlets. It was amid the innumerable channels of these *Paludes Babyloniæ* that Alexander was overtaken by a storm, and all but lost, during his sail down the Pallacopas.†

It is only when the mouth of the Hindíeh is opened by the destruction of the dams that the modern traveller is enabled to see the *Paludes Babyloniæ* as Alexander saw them. When, however, the Hindíeh is closed effectually for a time, the Khúzíf and Atchán cease altogether to exist, and the town of Semáva is supplied by two small canals derived from the Hillah branch of the Euphrates, near Díwánieh. Such was probably the case during the labours of the officers in the Euphrates expedition under Colonel Chesney, as the streams flowing from the Báhr-í-Nedjef are not laid down on any map. Instead of them, however, there is the course of an extinct river-bed passing east of the Báhr-í-Nedjef to Semáva, which may represent the Pallacopas of Alexander in a portion of its course.

* Between Semáva and the southern extremity of the Báhr-í-Nedjef, the marshes were, I believe, wholly unexplored, until I succeeded in sailing in a native vessel up the Húrán and Atchán, to Shináfieh, the residence of the Khuzeyl Sheikh. They are for the first time laid down on the map which accompanies this volume.

† Arrian, vii. 22, and Strabo.

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CHAPTER VI.

Kúfa—A Fiery Ride—Nedjef, and the Tomb of 'Alí—The Ghyáwr in the Golden Mosque — Fanaticism of the Sheahs — Far-travelled Coffins and Costly Interments — How the Prime-Minister got a Grave at a Great Bargain—Turkish Torpor and Cleanliness *versus* Persian Dirt and Vivacity.

A SAIL of four hours and a half from Keffil down the stream brings the pilgrim to a little tomb dedicated to Nebbí Yúnus (not *the* prophet of Nineveh, but a much more modern personage). Here the freights are discharged from the boats, and the journey to the shrine of 'Alí again commences by land, passing over a spot celebrated in modern history.

Sá'ad ibn 'Abú Wakkás, after the signal battle obtained by the Moslems at Kádessíyya, and the capture of the wealthy city Mádáyn, would fain have pursued Yezdegírd, the last of the Sassanian kings, to the Persian mountain fortress of Holwán. He was restrained from doing so by the cautious Khálíf Omar, who feared lest his generals, in the flush and excitement of victory, might hurry forward beyond the reach of succour. The climate of Mádáyn proving unhealthy to his troops, Sá'ad was ordered by the khálíf to seek some favourable site on the western side of the Euphrates, where there was good air, a well-watered plain, and plenty of grass. Sá'ad chose for this purpose the village of Kúfa, which, according to tradition, was the spot where the angel Gabriel alighted upon earth and prayed—where the waters of the deluge

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first burst forth from the ground—and where Noah embarked in the ark! The Arabs further pretend that the serpent, after tempting Eve, was banished to this place. Hence, they say, the guile and treachery for which the men of Kúfa were proverbial. The city which rose upon this spot became so celebrated, that the branch of the Euphrates upon which it stood was generally denominated Náhr Kúfa. The most ancient characters of the Arabic alphabet are termed Kúfic to the present day. It was here, too, that the unfortunate 'Alí—the son-in-law and successor of the Prophet—was assassinated, in the fifth year of his khálífat, by the three fanatic leaders of the Karigites.* Of Kúfa there now only remain a few low mounds and a fragment of wall. Although the city is said to have extended to Kerbella, forty-five miles distant, there are fewer relics of its greatness now visible than of Babylon, which was in ruins upwards of a thousand years before the foundation of Kúfa! Whatever may have been the fertility of Kúfa in the days of Sá'ad ibn 'Abú Wakkás, it has none to boast of now.

From Kúfa to Meshed 'Alí is a distance of 7 miles, over a gravelly soil, utterly devoid of vegetation. It was one of the hottest rides I ever remember to have experienced. There was not the slightest breath of air to dissipate the heat. The dome and minarets of Meshed 'Alí quivered in the mirage. The gravel reflected the sun's rays so powerfully as to cause men and animals to seek for temporary shelter under the scanty shade of the little round towers which at intervals guard the road. Our very dogs howled piteously being obliged to follow us, lest they should be left behind. Whenever the eye rested for an instant on any object, it felt scorched and

* For an interesting account of the scenes with which Kúfa is connected at the commencement of the Mohammedan era, see the "Lives of the Successors of Mohammed," by Washington Irving.

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bloodshot. An umbrella was useless, for, although it served to break the vertical heat of the mid-day sun, it concentrated the rays reflected from the ground, and afforded a welcome shade to the few flies which were able to exist in such a fiery atmosphere. Never was I more gratified than in gaining the tents, already pitched in a large oblong space within the walls, and near one of the gates of the town of Nedjef. Táhir Bey, who accompanied us, had insisted upon this arrangement; he would not be answerable for our security in the desert outside, because many roving parties of Bedouins were reported to be in the neighbourhood.

Nedjef was founded on the site of ancient Hira, which, in the early part of the first century, gave origin to a race of Arab kings, who subsequently acknowledged allegiance to the Persians, and acted as lieutenants of Irák. During the third century, many Jacobite Christians, driven by persecutions and disorders in the Church, took refuge at Hira; and, shortly before the birth of Mohammed, the king of Hira and all his subjects had embraced Christianity. Much is said of the splendour of the capital, which possessed two large palaces of extraordinary beauty. When 'Abú Beker, in the second year of the khálífat, undertook to execute the injunction of the Prophet, and to carry out the gigantic task submitted to him of converting the whole world to Islámism, he entrusted the conquest of Hira to the energetic Kháled. The city was speedily taken, its palaces stormed, its king killed in battle, and an annual tribute of 7000 pieces of gold imposed upon the kingdom. This was the first tribute ever levied by Moslems in a foreign land, and Hira was the first place beyond the confines of Arabia occupied by their advancing hosts.*

* See Washington Irving's "Lives of the Successors of Mohammed," already referred to.

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Nedjef is at the present day, however, far more celebrated as the spot where the body of the murdered 'Alí was consigned to the tomb, and that magnificent mosque erected over it, which annually attracts thousands of Sheah Mohammedans to perform a pilgrimage to its shrine, invariably known to the Persian as "Meshed 'Alí."

The town is situated on a cliff of reddish sandstone and gravel forty feet high, overlooking the Báhr-í-Nedjef. It is said to bear a striking resemblance to Jerusalem in its general appearance and position. The walls are in excellent repair, and surrounded by a deep and wide moat, now without water. On one side, this moat follows the line of a natural ravine, exhibiting a good geological section on its sides. The water of the Báhr, when connected with the Euphrates, is sweet and drinkable, but when the mouth of the Hindíeh is completely closed, it becomes very unpalatable, and the people of Nedjef are then obliged to convey water from Kúfa. This condition of the water arises, as previously stated, from its connexion with rocks of the gypsiferous series. The level of the sea, observed from Nedjef, has undoubtedly undergone considerable change—two distinct ranges of cliffs mark its former extent at different epochs.

It is seldom that a Christian has the opportunity of entering a Mohammedan place of worship, much less such a sacred mosque as that of Meshed 'Alí. We were all naturally anxious to visit it, and experienced no very insuperable objection on the part of our Súnní companions to aid in the accomplishment of our wish. Táhir Bey, like most others of his sect and race, took a pleasure in causing the Sheah Persians to "eat dirt" at the hands of the Ghyáwr. As military governor of the district, he had accompanied us with a strong escort, for the double purpose of guarding and doing honour to our party. The troops were now drawn up under the latter pretext, but

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in reality to conduct us to the mosque, and be prepared for any *emeute* which might arise in consequence of our temerity. The inhabitants, in accordance with their Oriental customs, rose and saluted, or returned the salutes of Dervísh Pasha and Táhir Bey as we passed through the bazaars; but they bestowed a very doubtful and scrutinizing glance on the large party of Firenghís. A crowd gathered as we marched onward, and, on approaching the gate of the outer court, the threatening looks and whispered remarks of the groups around made it evident that we were regarded with no especial favour. The troops drew up outside the gate, and, as any hesitation on our part might have produced serious consequences, we boldly entered the forbidden threshold.

It is all but impossible to convey to the mind of another the impression produced on the senses by the first inspection of a Persian mosque. The extreme richness and brilliancy of the polychromatic decoration, and the exquisite harmony of the whole, cannot fail to leave a lasting impression.

It has been said, and is generally recognized, that the Arian races, among whom the Persians are included, are wanting in originality of design. This is not, however, borne out by facts, because no Oriental people exhibit more original taste than the Persians in beauty of design and the power of expressing it, as exhibited in their edifices and works of art. Mr Fergusson, in his "Hand-Book of Architecture,"* well remarks on this subject, that "they are now too deeply depressed to attempt much; but it only seems to require a gleam of returning sunshine to enable them again to rival in art the ancient glories of Nineveh and Persepolis."

Like the generality of mosques, that of Meshed 'Alí is arranged in the form of a rectangle. The mausoleum

* Vol. i., p. 411.

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stands nearly in the centre of a large court, the walls of which, as well as those of the principal building, are adorned from top to base with square encaustic tiles. The design on these is a succession of scrolls, leaves, and doves wrought into the most intricate patterns. The colours, though bright, are so admirably and harmoniously blended and softened down by lines of white, that the surface appears like a rich mosaic set in silver. Each wall is divided by two tiers of blind arches, ornamented throughout in similar manner, above each of which are texts from the Korán, written in letters of gold. Two highly-decorated gateways, deeply set in lofty flat panels, give admission to the great court of the mosque, and serve to relieve the otherwise monotonous aspect of the enclosure. The summit of the mausoleum walls are likewise surrounded by passages from the Korán. At three corners are minarets, two of which in front are covered throughout with gilt tiles, said to have cost two tománs (£1 sterling) each. These, together with a magnificent dome of the same costly material, give to the *tout ensemble* a gorgeous appearance. Seen in the distance, with the sun shining upon it, the dome of Meshed 'Alí might be mistaken for a mound of gold rising from the level deserts. Before the door of the shrine stands an elegant fountain of brass, bright and polished like the dome itself.

If the court of this remarkable building be so gorgeously and extravagantly adorned, we may perhaps credit the accounts of its internal richness and magnificence. Slabs of the purest gold are said to pave the flooring of the sanctuary, and utensils innumerable and of unknown value—the gifts of the pious—to decorate the shrine. If all be true which Oriental tongue speaks, we are called on to believe that a mint of untold treasure lies concealed in the vaults below. The tomb of the

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great saint was not for infidels to approach and defile; but the Ghyáwr were perfectly content with the sight they were permitted to behold in the court of the mosque, in which there was more than sufficient to engage attention and excite admiration. It is exceedingly strange to remark how the same observances have prevailed unchanged from early times. We read that, eighteen centuries ago, our Saviour went up to Jerusalem, "and found in the temple those that sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, and the changers of money sitting." * So in the court of Meshed 'Alí a constant fair is carried on at stalls, which are supplied with every article likely as offerings to attract the eye of the rich or pious—among these white *doves* are particularly conspicuous.

We did not tarry long, as it was evident, from the demeanour of those around us, that we were not welcome pilgrims to the holy shrine; we therefore slowly retired, casting a last lingering glance on this noble and fascinating specimen of Persian art. It was only on emerging from the gateway that we for the first time perceived the object for which the Turkish troops had accompanied us. Aware of the excitable feelings of the Persian crowd, Táhir Bey had taken all parties unawares, by marching us direct to the mosque before the people could comprehend his intention, or collect for the purpose of resistance. He subsequently acknowledged that in returning he was not a little alarmed at the aspect of the populace Kindly feeling and hospitality were certainly not at that moment engraven on their countenances. It is difficult to forget the expression of passion which greeted any of the party who accidentally brushed against the robe of a "true believer." The injured "professor of the faith" hastily drew back, muttered an audible curse on the unclean Firenghí, and proceeded on his way to wash and cleanse

* John ii. 14.

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himself from the polluted touch, or put his hand on the handle of his broad-bladed dagger, as if about to inflict summary vengeance for the insult he had received. Nedjef and Kerbella are notorious for the fanatics who congregate to those places from all quarters. If they had been aware of Táhir Bey's intention to admit us to the mosque, there is no doubt that they would have collected in front of the gates and made open resistance to such an iniquitous proceeding on the part of a Mohammedan. As it was, we had the satisfaction of beholding the interior of a mosque, to which but few Europeans are ever likely to obtain access.

The profound veneration in which the memory of 'Alí is regarded by his followers, causes Nedjef to be the great place of pilgrimage for the Sheah Mohammedans, by whom the town is entirely supported. At a low average, 80,000 persons annually flock to pay their vows at the sacred shrine, and from 5000 to 8000 corpses are brought every year from Persia and elsewhere to be buried in the ground consecrated by the blood of the martyred kháliff. The dead are conveyed in boxes covered with coarse felt, and placed two on each side upon a mule, or one upon each side, with a ragged conductor on the top, who smokes his kaliyún and sings cheerily as he jogs along, quite unmindful of his charge. Every caravan travelling from Persia to Bághdád carries numbers of coffins; and it is no uncommon sight, at the end of a day's march, to see fifty or sixty piled upon each other on the ground. As may be imagined, they are not the most agreeable companions on a long journey, especially when the unruly mule carrying them gets between the traveller and the wind!

The fee charged by the authorities of the mosque for burial varies from 10 to 200 tománs (£5 to £100), and sometimes much more. It is entirely at the discre-

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tion of the mullas, and they proportion it according to the wealth or rank of the deceased. On the arrival of a

Carriage of Corpses.

corpse, it is left outside the walls, while the relatives or persons in charge of it (frequently the muleteer of the caravan) endeavour to make a bargain for its final resting-place. Several days are frequently spent in vain over these preliminaries. At length one party or other gives way—generally the relatives—as the corpse, after many days' and frequently months' carriage in a powerful sun, has disseminated disease and death among its followers, who are glad to rid themselves of its companionship. The place of sepulture for the lower classes, or for those whose friends are unwilling to pay for a vault within the sacred precincts of the mosque, is outside the walls on the north side of the city, where the graves are neatly constructed with bricks, and covered with gravel or cement to preserve them from injury. When the corpse is to be

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buried within the walls, it is conveyed into the town. The officers of interment then generally find some pretext for breaking the former compact, and the unfortunate relatives are under the necessity of striking a fresh and much harder bargain.

The same system of official fleecing is adopted at the adjoining city of Kerbella, where a story is told of the manner in which Hadjí Mírza Aghassí, a rascally ex-prime minister of Persia, outwitted the cupidity of the hard-hearted cemetery authorities. He was known to be enormously wealthy, and had gone to Kerbella that the sanctity of the spot, where he proposed to lay his bones, might in some measure atone for the crimes he had committed. On his deathbed, he sent to inquire what sum would be demanded for a vault within the mosque, and was informed that no less than 2000 tomans (£1000) was expected from so great a man as an ex-prime-minister. He then sent to ask the fee for a hole outside the town. Thinking he was joking at their expense, the mullas replied in dudgeon "a kerán" (one shilling). The old fellow at once closed the bargain, and was actually buried in the common ground! His tomb is marked by a simple brick monument, which attracts much attention because it covers the bones of a "great" scoundrel.

But to return to Nedjef. The constant influx of Persians is vastly enriching the place, as proved by its recent enlargement, and the rebuilding of new walls round a great part of its circuit. To remedy the inconvenience at times resulting from the want of good water, a new canal is in course of construction direct from the Euphrates, which, being excavated in solid rock to the depth of fifty feet, will, when finished, reflect great credit on their skill as engineers. Workmen are seen busily engaged in building and restoring houses, and tradespeople appear to thrive. But there is always a remarkable contrast

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between the life and activity of a Persian and the dulness and decay of a Turkish city. There is, however, one point in which the better-clad Turk surpasses his Eastern neighbour; he always exhibits the flowing sleeve of a clean under garment, but the Persian has no regard whatever for personal cleanliness, and even a royal prince seldom indulges in the luxury of a change of linen.

The curiosity of the inhabitants of Nedjef was exhibited more than is usually the case with Orientals. They collected in large numbers at a respectful distance from our tents; some even went so far beyond their ordinary habits, as to bring their hárems to indulge in a prolonged stare at the wonderful Ghyáwr who had the audacity to enter their mosque. The night was oppressively hot, and, confined within the close walls, we felt it doubly so from previously sleeping in the open desert.

The governor took every precaution against danger and insult, by placing a strong guard around our tents—sentinels being stationed at very short intervals apart. But for this foresight, it is possible to conceive what the audacity and fanaticism of the Sheahs might have dared and effected during the darkness of night. All, however, passed off quietly, and long before dawn the Firenghí camp was astir. While the tents were being struck, we were suddenly assailed by the most foul and unbearable stench; several persons retched violently, all being more or less affected. It was afterwards ascertained that a large pile of coffins, which had stood for several days in the fierce sun, waiting for the concluding bargain between their owners and the authorities, had been hastily removed on the previous day to afford space for our camp. They were placed out of sight in an adjoining empty space, enclosed by a high wall, but the morning breeze blowing from that direction, unfortunately revealed that which it was never intended should be made known to us. It was

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fortunate this did not occur during the night, or we might have been smitten with severe illness. Welcome was the bugle sound that summoned us to mount our steeds and ride forth once more into the pure atmosphere of the Arab desert.

On quitting Nedjef the commissioners were, of course, saluted by the garrison, who were drawn up outside the gate for the purpose, and by the cannon from the walls. As the red light momentarily flashed upon the golden dome of the mosque, the effect, viewed through the column of white smoke, was such as few artists can paint. The dead gold mass was for the instant illumined with a colour rivalling even that of Mont Blanc viewed from Geneva at sunset. There was a sublimity about the scene which did not fail to impress the minds of all who witnessed it. As if for the sake of contrast, the sun immediately afterwards rose, and with his rays enveloped the mosque in a flood of dazzling brilliancy.

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CHAPTER VII.

Kerbella—The Governor's *Déjeûner*—The "Martyr" Husséyn, and his Mosque—Siege and Massacre—The "Campo Santo" at Kerbella—Oratory of 'Alí—Magnificent Sunrise—Eastern Ladies, Mounted and on Foot—The Ferry.

THE direct road from Nedjef to Kerbella runs along the skirt of the great Arabian desert, but is little frequented on account of the danger from Bedouin plunderers—none but large and well-armed parties daring to follow it. Within sight on the east are the marshes of the Hindíeh, otherwise the route is entirely without water. We met nothing, and saw nothing worthy of notice to relieve the tedium of this desert journey, except here and there an Arab tomb, with a few reeds stuck into the sand in lieu of gravestones, and now and then a human skull or the skeleton of a camel—the remains probably of some poor wretches overcome by fatigue and thirst, whose strength failed them before the long-coveted draught could be attained.

The approach to Kerbella is somewhat more lively than that to Nedjef. An abundance of date-trees surround the town, and several buildings erected outside the walls imply a greater amount of security from the roving tribes. At the outskirts are several kilns, where bricks of similar size and form to those of Babylon are made for modern purposes.

Here a reception and scene awaited us much resem-

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bling that which greeted our arrival at Hillah. The civil governor came forth to pay his respects, accompanied by the mullas and grandees of the mosques, in extensive turbans of the finest and cleanest white muslin, embroidered with gold, and otherwise most picturesquely attired. In truly Oriental style, they informed us that their houses and all they possessed were at our disposal, a compliment which, in common with many others, means nothing, or, as the Osmánli would express it, "bosh." As before, a band endeavoured to execute its best airs on the joyful occasion, but, as every man played his own tune, at his own time, and with all the lungs which nature had endowed him with, it is totally impossible to say what was the original air. Seldom is heard such a discordant din; it was laughable beyond endurance. With this too great attention, in a cloud of dust we entered the gates of Kerbella, and dismounted at the seráy, where, after coffee and pipes, the worthy governor, who had been previously informed of our expected arrival, announced that he would be highly honoured by our taking breakfast.

The tents had but just arrived, so there was little prospect of our meal being prepared for some time. The invitation was therefore accepted, and we were duly ushered into an adjoining room, where, around a huge tray, raised a foot from the ground, we sixteen hungry travellers sat down upon the cushioned floor. The components of the entertainment were pillaf, a few vegetables cooked in a variety of ways, and one small dish of meat —all, it is true, pleasantly flavoured with lemon, but so overwhelmed with grease, that, unless the guests had been hungry beyond description, they would have fared but badly. Each dish, however, was rapidly emptied of its contents, as hand after hand was thrust into the well-piled heaps. The whole entertainment was concluded

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with a large bowl of—not intoxicating liquors (Mohammedan hospitality, of course, does not admit of such forbidden draughts) ; but—mild innocuous sherbet, into which we dived strange-shaped wooden spoons, one being supplied to every two or three persons present. When the satisfied guests ceased from their labours and looked around upon their friends, the mutual examination was repaid by the sight of greasy hands and well-oiled beards. This ample feast duly fitted us for a ramble through the town and a visit to such "lions" as Kerbella contained.

Throughout the East news flies with unaccountable rapidity, and it is frequently impossible to trace its origin. An instance of this occurred at Kerbella on the occasion of our visit. Although we had travelled in the most speedy manner from Nedjef, our proceedings at that place had got wind, and we found the gateway of the great mosque of Husséyn filled with a crowd of ragamuffins, most forbidding in appearance, armed with clubs, sticks, and daggers to oppose our entry. At the head of the group stood a dervísh with demoniacal expression of countenance. A tuft of shaggy hair hung from the top of his otherwise bald head, and his felt garment, scarcely sufficient to cover his nakedness, was patched with divers colours, and in every direction. With his legs astride, a dagger in one hand, and a formidable bludgeon over his shoulder, he looked the picture of a rascal capable of any mischief, and ready to excite the multitude to commit any excess. During our stay at Kerbella, this dervísh acted as a species of evil spirit, watching our movements, and following us about from place to place. The mullas from the interior made a sign that we should not approach. We were therefore obliged to rest contented with a distant view. Táhir Bey dared not to force a passage ; nor would it have been prudent to do so, as it was clear that the populace

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was prepared for resistance. Although the soldiers might have beaten off an undisciplined mob, we should not have been justified in the attempt. Tolerably good views of the mosques were, however, obtained from houses in their immediate vicinity. Two or three of our Christian attendants, favoured by some of their Mohammedan fellows, succeeded in gaining admission to the mosque of Husséyn; but they were soon discovered, beaten with sticks, stoned, and turned out along with their introducers. They might congratulate themselves in getting off so easily. A short account of the origin of these monuments may not be without interest to the uninitiated in Arab history.

On the death of 'Alí, the fourth khálíf, according to the Súnnís, in the fortieth year of the Hegira, his eldest son Hassán was elected as his successor; but, lacking the energy and courage necessary during the civil wars that distracted the early periods of the Moslem empire, he shortly afterwards abdicated in favour of Moáwyah, his father's great opponent, and was murdered nine years afterwards at the instigation, it is supposed, of Yezid, the son of Moáwyah. When Yezid succeeded his father in the khálífat, his first aim was to secure undisputed possession of power. He therefore endeavoured to extract an oath of fealty from, or to compass the death of, Husséyn, the second son of 'Alí, who inherited the daring character of his father. Husséyn discovered the plot, and escaped with his brothers and family to Mecca, where he declared himself openly in opposition to Yezid. On receiving overtures of assistance from the people of Kúfa, he set out for that city with a small force; but soon discovered that the Kúfites were fickle and faithless. Obeid-'allah, the governor, acting with promptitude, sent out strong forces to intercept Husséyn's approach, whose little party was surrounded at Kerbella, and cut off from the

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waters of the Euphrates, so that they suffered the extremities of thirst. After various parleys, orders were issued by Obeid'allah to 'Amar, in command of the khálíf's forces: —"If Husséyn and his men submit and take the oath of allegiance, treat them kindly; if they refuse, slay them—ride over them—trample them under the feet of thy horses!" Husséyn, seeing that all hope of honourable terms was vain, resolved to die, but to die bravely. His little band determined to share his desperate fortunes. A general assault was at length made upon his camp, which, being skilfully arranged, was for a time successfully defended. Numbers, however, ultimately prevailed, and Husséyn, faint from loss of blood, sank to the earth, and was stripped ere life was fled. Thirty wounds were counted on his body. His head was sent to Obeid'allah; and Shemr, who carried the order for his death, with his troops, rode forward and backward over the body, as he had been ordered, until it was trampled into the earth. Seventy-two followers of Husséyn were slain, seventeen of whom were descendants of Mohammed's only daughter, —among them Husséyn's brother 'Abbás. The only persons who escaped from this massacre were the women and children, with 'Alí-ezgher, the son of Husséyn, from whom are descended the modern "Seyids." *

The Persians hold the memory of Husséyn in great veneration, entitling him Sháhíd, or the Martyr. He and his lineal descendants for nine generations are enrolled among the twelve Imáms or pontiffs of the Persian creed. The first ten days of the month of Moharrem are held sacred, in commemoration of the strife between Husséyn and his enemies, and are called "'Ashíera," the tenth day being kept with great solemnity as the an-

* This interesting, but cruel, episode in Moslem history is given, with affecting details, in Washington Irving's "Lives of the Successors of Mohammed," from which the above account is partially extracted.

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niversary of his martyrdom.* A splendid mosque was erected in after years on the spot where he fell, and to which, it is said, the body of his brother Hassán was removed. An inferior one was dedicated to 'Abbás, their brother, who shared the fate of Hüsséyn.†

The mosque of Husséyn is very similar in plan to that of Meshed 'Alí, but cannot be compared with it for richness of decoration, cleanliness, or state of repair. The dome only is gilded. One of the three minarets appears in imminent danger of falling into the court below, the walls of which are in a most dilapidated condition. This state of things arises from the occupation of the city by the Turkish troops under Dáoud Pasha of Bághdád. Nedjef and Kerbella, being sanctuaries of high repute, were resorted to by every class of ruffians and bad characters, the extent of whose outrages became so glaring that it was necessary to suppress and root them out from their places of concealment. The pasha made himself master of Nedjef; but Kerbella, being thus reinforced by the expelled "Yerrimasís," held out during a long siege. An approach was made to the weakest part of the walls, where a breach was eventually effected. The sol-

* These fêtes are celebrated among the Persians with theatrical representations of the scenes attendant on the death of Husséyn, for an account of which I may refer the reader to Lady Sheil's amusing "Glimpses of Life and Manners in Persia," p. 125.

† At the distance of a day's gallop from Kerbella is another site of extreme interest in the history of the Arab conquest, El Kadder, the ancient Kádessíyya, where Sá'ad ibn 'Abú Wakkás, the founder of Kúfa, utterly vanquished the vast Persian host, and seized the sacred standard of the Dárafash-í-Káwání, the loss of which was regarded as a symbol of the loss of power by the Persians. With the disaster at Kádessíyya the rule of the Sassanian kings terminated, and the religion of Mohammed spread unchecked throughout Irán. Kádessíyya has been visited by two Englishmen—Messrs W. B. Barker and Boulton—who met with extensive ruins and halls. These are ornamented with a range of masks, carried round the archivolts of the arched roofs, in the same style as at Al Hádhr in the desert near Mosul, where they present such a remarkable feature in Sassanian architecture.

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diers entered, and the place was given over to pillage, when the most dreadful scenes took place. The troops poured volleys among unoffending women and children, and massacred the inhabitants within the very mosques. Táhir Bey himself was an officer at this cruel siege, and received his promotion in consequence. With his own hand he cut down three of the Yerrimasís, while his men, dragging forth seventy from among a party of women, with whom they had taken shelter, shot them on the spot!

The marks of this celebrated siege are still visible in various parts of the town. Opposite to the seráy, the houses demolished have never been rebuilt, but exhibit a wretched scene of destruction. The mosques suffered seriously, and the ravages of the cannon-balls are distinctly traceable on their domes, as well as in the walls of the town, where the holes made have not been repaired. The date-trees also exhibit evident marks of the injuries received from a cross fire, which for a length of time prevented the batteries of the Turks from making the breach. Several have holes through the centre of their stems, others have large pieces torn from their sides; one still flourishes, although the branches are merely connected with the stem by a narrow strip of wood on one side; some have never recovered the effect of their wounds, but stand like stunted poles, without foliage.*

The arrangements for the disposal of the dead at Kerbella are on the same system as at Meshed 'Alí; but the numbers conveyed thither yearly are considerably larger —Kerbella being, for some reason or other, both peculiarly aristocratic and popular. It is always alluded to by the Persians in preference to Meshed 'Alí. Little respect is shewn to the dead in committing them to their

* It was chiefly in consequence of this siege, that hostilities had almost taken place between the Turkish and Persian Governments, as stated in the opening chapter of this volume.

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last resting-place, a grave being dug of barely sufficient depth to cover the coffin, which is hastily and unceremoniously covered up. Cemeteries throughout the East are generally kept in tolerable order; but at Kerbella no care is exhibited, the brickwork of the graves has fallen in, and the ravages of dogs, jackals, and hyænas may be observed in the holes they have made, and in the foul shreds of every hue and colour torn from the coffins and bodies of the corpses. It might be thought that, seeing such a disgusting sight, the thousands of pilgrims who return to their homes would be induced to discountenance the system of conveying the remains of their friends to this place. Such, however, is not the case; and the desire to be buried on a spot rendered sacred by the blood of a martyr, prevails over all other considerations, and a tomb at Kerbella, or Meshed 'Alí, is looked on as an expiation for the greatest crimes, and a surety that, at the day of judgment, the pardoned sinner will rise into the seventh heaven.*

This system of forming cemeteries, and conveying the dead for interment to some distant and sacred spot, has prevailed from very early times among different nations. I shall have, ere long, to describe some remarkable ancient cemeteries, which, from their magnitude, could never have originated from a fixed population in the immediate neighbourhood, unless aided by an accumulation from many distant localities.

Outside the gates of Kerbella is a small oratory, said to have been erected on the spot where the great 'Alí had a celebrated vision in his tent, and, from that circumstance, it is called "the tent of 'Alí." It is a dodecagon, having six entrances, and is surrounded by a covered veranda

* These are not, however, the only sacred burial-places to which the Persians resort. Káthemá'in near Bághdád, Sámára, Meshed, and Koom are all likewise hallowed from possessing the bones of the descendants of 'Alí.

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supported on columns. Judging from the cracks in the building, it is not destined to stand for any great length of time. The whitened walls were written over with many extracts from Persian poets and modern effusions, but the place was anything but clean. Two cunning-looking Persian mullas received us, but objected to our entering with our boots. Having no desire to insult their prejudices we abstained from going beyond the veranda; but the Turkish officer accompanying us took no notice of the objection, and walked boldly in. "By 'Alí's beard! why do you enter this clean and holy place to pollute it with your unclean feet?" said one of the guardians, in angry expostulation. "My boots are quite as clean as your filthy floor! Look—see the dirt upon it! When you clean your floor I'll take off my boots; but I am not going to soil my feet to please you," was the answer returned, to the intense disgust of the mullas.

The bazaars of Kerbella are well supplied with all kinds of grain, and articles from every part of the world carried thither by the pilgrims. It is celebrated for the manufacture of filigree-work, and for elaborate engraving upon the nacreous valves of the pearl oyster (*avicula margaritifera*), obtained from the fisheries at Báhreyn, in the Persian Gulf.

Travellers love to descant on the beauties of Eastern cities; but it is seldom that it falls to their lot to witness such wonderful effects of light as fell under my own observation on this short journey. Early on the morning of departure from Kerbella, I took a stroll to a little distance from the walls, and beheld a magnificent spectacle as "the glorious orb of day" rose above the horizon, and gradually lighted up the golden dome of the great mosque. The dark and comparatively sombre green surface of that which enshrines the bones of 'Abbás still remained enveloped in a thick curtain of blue mist, until

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an orange or deep red tint crept slowly over the principal features of the edifice. This continued during the space of at least two minutes, when the strange and fairy-like effect was dispelled by the bright sunshine. While it lasted, it was truly imposing and enchanting.

From Kerbella our party returned direct to Bághdád, following for a considerable distance the course of a canal derived from the Euphrates, which, on account of its flowing to the tomb of the saint, is called Husséyníyya. The quantity of earth deposited, and frequently thrown out of its bed, is so great as to form an enormous line of mound on either side. Unless attention in this respect is paid to irrigating canals, they soon become choked with sediment, and cease their operations. The path to Mús-seib, being traversed by so many pilgrims and caravans on their way to and from Kerbella, is completely cut up by parallel tracks, and more beaten than any other throughout the East. It is, however, generally considered unsafe, and a large caravan was said to have been bodily carried off by the Bedouins two days before we passed along it. Fearing a like fate, some Persian ladies, with their attendants, begged they might be permitted to take advantage of our escort.

The custom, universally adopted by Oriental ladies, of riding astride like a man, is certainly the most ungraceful that can be conceived. Enveloped in the ample folds of a blue cotton cloak, her face (as required by the strict injunctions of the Korán) concealed under a black or white mask, her feet encased in wide yellow boots, and these in turn thrust into slippers of the same colour, her knees nearly on a level with her chin, and her hands holding on by the scanty mane of the mule—an Eastern lady is the most uncouth and inelegant form imaginable. On foot, too, her appearance is not much improved; for the awkward boots and slippers compel her to slide and

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roll along in such an ungainly manner as forcibly to remind the beholder of a duck waddling to a pond, or of a bundle of clothes on short thick stilts. To complete the picture, it must be left to those European ladies who have had the fortune to gain admission to the privacy of a hárem, to state whether the tone and conversation of their Mohammedan friends is more polished and elegant than their external appearance; many a fair form is concealed beneath a rough exterior; but, if we may judge of the fair sex of Islám by the native Christian ladies, I fear the answer will not be satisfactory. I remember on one occasion seeing an Armenian beauty at a *fête* presented with a choice bouquet. On receiving it, she languidly rose from the embroidered ottoman, and then —to the utmost surprise and indignation of the giver— deliberately sat upon it!

The Euphrates at Músseib is crossed by ferry-boats— huge, unwieldy apparatuses, roughly built of planks overlaid with bitumen, and each capable of containing some dozen loaded animals, and a motley throng of human beings, men, women, and children. A low projecting bow acts as a landing-jetty, and the craft is guided by a rudder of most complicated construction, sufficiently large to steer a vessel three times its size. Men, with poles in the shallow water and rude oars in the stream, propel the mass onwards; and thus, after an infinity of shouting, and screaming, and invocations of 'Alí, the boat reaches the opposite shore. A throng of ragged pilgrims, on their return from Kerbella, had just preceded our party, and were squabbling who should first enter one of these Noah's arks, when our cávasses—with the usual promptitude and small sense of justice which these officers possess in so peculiar a manner—rushed into the crowd, and, by dint of tongue and stick, fighting their way through it, seized the beleaguered boat for our especial use. Ex-

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cluded from it, the struggle for supremacy was transferred to the craft alongside, and the usual scene at a ferry occurred. Every would-be passenger endeavours to obtain a footing for himself and his animal, whether horse, mule, or—still more useful "friend of man"—the donkey, whose slit nostrils and raw hide prove that his services are scarcely appreciated as they ought to be. Footing once secured, the difficulty is, how to induce the frightened animals to raise their other three feet from *terra firma* into the same position, but caresses and hard thumps, kicks and curses, usually effect the desired object. When the boat is crammed so full that no restless animal can stir, the boat is shoved off, and the living mass takes its chance of floating or sinking, "as Allah wills it"—the gunwale within an inch or two of the water-level. The animals of our party, however, usually crossed the river in the more expeditious and primitive manner represented in the Assyrian bas-reliefs. The common herd was driven into the water, and compelled to swim the stream, but grooms led the more valuable horses by their halters into the river, and swam across with them, urging the unwilling with barbarous grunts, such as can only proceed from an Arab mouth. The pads, saddles, and bridles were passed over with the baggage in the boats. All crossed safely to the opposite side.

Músseib is a miserable but busy place, supported entirely by the traffic to and from Kerbella. Large quantities of grain from the land adjoining the Euphrates were being thrashed, and a number of women were employed in grinding it with the ordinary stone hand-mill of the country. Nearer to the river, men were mending kúfahs—those round boats described by Herodotus as used in his time upon the rivers of Babylonia,—made of reeds, coated inside and out with melted bitumen, derived from the springs of Hit, higher up the Euphrates.

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Others were employed in making baskets from the stems of the liquorice-plant (*Glycyrrhiza glabra*), which they adeptly twisted together. Above the village, on the eastern side, a sud or dam of earth had been recently constructed at a point where the river had, during the season of flood, burst upon the land, and swept all before it as far as the ruins of Babylon. At a few miles from Músseib we rejoined the road previously traversed between Bághdád and Hillah, and reached the former place without new adventure.

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CHAPTER VIII.

Climate of Chaldæa—Christmas in Bághdád—Departure for the South—Múbárek's Misadventure—The Kyáya of Hillah—Bashí-Bázúks.

FURTHER political questions detained the commissioners at Bághdád until the end of December, when the decree was issued for our proceeding to the frontier. It was arranged that the H.E.I.C.'s armed steamer, *Nitocris*, under the command of Captain Felix Jones, whose intimate knowledge of the country and amiable disposition are so well known to travellers in that remote region of the globe, should convey the whole party to Mohammerah, the southern point of the disputed boundary line. The mules, horses, and servants were to proceed by land, guarded by the troop of cavalry appointed by the Turkish Government as its due portion of an escort to accompany the commissioners during the progress of their labours. It was proposed that this party should travel by the direct route through Lower Mesopotamia, instead of the more beaten track along the western side of the Euphrates. As the route by the Jezíreh* had been scarcely visited by Europeans, I naturally felt a strong desire to take advantage of the opportunity now afforded of breaking new ground. I was influenced by a twofold object: that of examining the geology of the Chaldæan marshes, and that of exploring the ruins of

* Jezíreh means "island," and, although a misnomer, is applied to the whole of Mesopotamia between the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates.

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Warka, to which native tradition assigns the honour of being the birthplace of the patriarch Abraham. Colonel Williams, ever ready to afford facilities to scientific enterprise, not only granted a willing consent to my proposal to join the overland party, but also suggested that Mr Churchill should accompany me.

In order that some idea may be formed of the difficulties and dangers attending a journey into Lower Babylonia or Chaldæa Proper, I may here mention, that, during spring and summer, when the Hindíeh branch of the Euphrates is closed, the greater part of the country, from above lat. 32°, is a continuous marsh towards the south, quite impassable except in canoes called terrádas. In these the natives are enabled to keep up communication among themselves on the spots of elevated land which raise their heads above the surrounding swamps. The heat, however, prevents the approach of travellers. In autumn these inundations rapidly subside, but the resultant malaria is so great as to deter any European from invading this *terra* (if it can be so called) *incognita*. The only season of the year, therefore, which frees Chaldæa from water and fever is the winter, when the air becomes rarified. The great alternations in temperature which here take place are scarcely to be credited. No sooner does the ardent heat of summer abate, than cool breezes begin to blow, and the thermometer quickly falls below the freezing point. This is due to the fact that the soil of the marshes is a comparatively recent deposit from the retiring sea of the Persian Gulf, and is therefore highly impregnated with marine salts, across which the wind in its passage is rendered intensely cold. I have myself seen the Arabs, completely benumbed, drop from their saddles. But during winter another obstacle opposes progress. A very large portion of the country, which was a few months previously covered with inunda-

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tion, is now waterless, sometimes for two or three days' journey. The Arab tribes, too, are perfectly wild and uncontrolled, regarding strangers among them with infinite suspicion.

Under such unpromising circumstances, it is not at all surprising that this region has been so little visited, and that so many monuments of its past history still remain to be explored. In no other part of Babylonia is there such astonishing proof of ancient civilization and denseness of population. Some lofty pile is generally visible to mark the site of a once-important city; while numerous little spots, covered with broken pottery, point to the former existence of villages and of a rural population. Traces of old canal-beds prove the care with which the whole country was watered when the marshes were confined within proper limits, and the land of the Chaldees flourished.

Christmas-day was spent in great festivity at the hospitable and well-ordered board of the British Residency, where all the Europeans at Bághdád met, as customary, to celebrate our great Christian festival. On the second morning afterwards, a gathering took place outside the gates of the city, at the little bridge over the Mess'údí canal, preparatory to our long journey. The caravan was of considerable size, being composed of the servants and animals belonging to the four commissions—the whole escorted by four light guns, and one hundred well-mounted, well-armed Turkish cavalry. The little red and white pennants attached to the lances of the soldiers imparted a gay and lively appearance to the cavalcade as it moved along.

We pursued the road previously travelled to Hillah, which place we reached in a heavy shower of rain on the third day. Here an accident happened, which was near proving fatal to a wild Dhefyr Arab, named Múbárek,

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whom I had taken into my service, at the suggestion of Captain Jones, for the purpose of protecting my little party in case of any temporary separation from the main body during my researches. I was unwilling to be entirely dependent on the troops for guidance and safe-conduct, and it is always advisable, on entering an unknown region, to secure the protection of a native, or one well acquainted with the people amongst whom the traveller has to pass. The Dhefyr Arabs belong to the true Bedouin tribes, and roam from the western shores of the Persian Gulf, along the banks of the Lower Euphrates, far into the deserts of Arabia. They bear the character of being more cruel and bloodthirsty than the generality of Bedouins; but they claim a species of freemasonry among other tribes—any ragamuffin among them enjoying the privilege of protection in an extraordinary way.

In the present instance, however, the Dhefyr proved to be rather an embarrassment than a gain to my party; for his depredations had so frequently been extended into the marshes on the east of the Euphrates, that there was no good feeling manifested towards him. Of this, however, I was not aware at the time of engaging him. Múbárek was not one of the brightest nor most prepossessing of Arabs. He was little in stature, ugly in countenance, dirty in person, and his abba and keffíeh were both in the last stage of decay. He brought with him another of his tribe—a half-witted fellow, named Mayúf, whose drolleries served to amuse the tedium of the barren, cheerless desert. Just before reaching the point at which the road turns through the gardens towards the bridge, Múbárek's horse, a spirited little animal, with only a halter on his head, took fright, leaped a wall, and tore away at a furious pace among the thickly-planted date-trees. The Arab, of course, had no control over his steed, and ran the chance of getting his brains dashed out by coming

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in contact with a tree. The horse rushed onwards nothing daunted by the labyrinth he had to thread, until his feet becoming entangled in the work of some cotton-spinners, he threw his rider with great violence. The poor fellow lay senseless, with the blood streaming from his mouth and nostrils, when an Arab bystander hastened to bring him round in the most approved native manner. Raising the injured man in his arms, he shook him exactly as a farmer shakes a sack of wheat to settle down the grain! By so doing, it was supposed that the blood would be expelled from the head into its right place. After several repetitions of the operation, the patient opened his eyes, gave a deep exclamation of "Allah! Allah!" picked up his spear, and then, apparently little the worse for his accident, staggered after his truant and unmanageable steed.

On gaining the western side of the bridge, we learned that the Turkish officers of Dervísh Pasha's suite had kindly exerted themselves in obtaining quarters for myself and companion at the house of Shebíb 'Agha, the Kyáya of Hillah, a venerable gentleman with long flowing beard of the purest white, whose visible family consisted of his brother—a fac-simile of himself—and three sons, varying from nine to twelve years of age. The boys, all handsome little fellows, standing with the servants in the presence of their father and his guests, presented us with coffee and the usual accompaniments on our arrival. Our kind host insisted on supplying ourselves, servants, and animals, with food and provender during our stay in Hillah. Anxious to obtain as much information as possible on the subject of our journey, I inquired concerning our line of route, and ascertained that he had visited Niffar, one of the great ruins in the centre of the Jezíreh. I therefore asked if he had seen the stone obelisk which is said to lie near the mound.

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Shebíb 'Agha stroked his beard, considered for a moment, and then replied, that—"By Allah! he did not remember to have seen any such stone; but the Arabs tell a story that sometimes they see a boat jutting out of the ruins, which shines like gold, with a flame of fire proceeding from its centre; but, Máshallah! the Arabs are so alarmed at the sight, they dare not approach!" He could, of course, give no further information concerning this wonderful apparition.

The rain continuing to fall in torrents during the greater part of the day, we were confined to the house. In the interval three Jews called on the kyáya, and entered into a long but animated discussion with him on the subject of an overcharge of taxes. One of the Israelites was a voluble and accomplished orator, rolling forth the Arabic gutturals with all the roundness and fluency of a true son of the desert. He certainly made use of his talents to the utmost, but whether with or without effect on the purse-strings of the kyáya, I cannot say, because I quitted the house before his oration was concluded. I may here notice a fact, which must infallibly occur to the observation of travellers. When two Englishmen meet, the "weather" is generally the introduction to other topics of conversation, but is soon forgotten in the interest of other subjects. Throughout the East, however, "money" is the all-absorbing theme. Money begins and ends a conversation. The word "píastre," "kerán," or "flúce," invariably occurs within the first few sentences, and as invariably ends the debate! Frequently, after a lengthened discussion on the subject, a little dirty bag is produced from the inner folds of the dress, and two or three small coins are counted out with the greatest deliberation.

I was now informed, to my great disappointment and vexation, that the troops had received counter-orders,

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and were to proceed by the ordinary road from Hillah by the west of the Euphrates. Thus all my plans and arrangements appeared in a fair way of being frustrated. I was not, however, disposed to resign them without an effort, and therefore set out with my companion to consult with our good friend Táhir Bey, who fortunately happened to be in the town. He was as frank and hearty as ever, but strongly endeavoured to dissuade me from my intention. He represented truly the kind of country we should have to traverse: the great inundations, and the wild character of the native Arabs, likely to rebel against the government at any moment. Seeing, however, that his representations did not alter my determination, he recommended me to take a few Bashí Bázúks, or irregular horsemen. On my assenting to this, he immediately issued his orders, and, moreover, volunteered to furnish me with letters to certain sheikhs, through whose tribes we should have to pass. I felt highly pleased at the promptitude he shewed in meeting my wishes, and took leave, anticipating the delightful prospect before me of entering on ground hitherto untrodden by European foot.

It was arranged that the bulk of our animals should proceed with the troops under the charge of a cáwas, the mír-í-akhor (master of the horse), and the greater number of servants, while a small proportion was set apart as our own especial convoy.

At sunset, we sat down to an Arab dinner provided by our host. After much entreaty the old gentleman consented to sit with, instead of waiting upon us. We had already discussed one greasy dish, and were waiting for another, when my servant unfortunately placed wine upon the table. Shebíb 'Agha, like a good Mussulman, jumped up as if shot through the heart; nor could all our entreaties, nor even the removal of the alarming bottle of

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forbidden liquid, prevail on him to resume his seat at the board. He had sat with Ghyáwr who drank wine; they were not therefore fitting companions for one of the faithful!

The continued rain during the night delayed the appearance of our future escort, which did not shew itself till the sun shone forth late the following morning, when eight well-mounted Bashí Bázúks, with two drummers, mustered before the door of Shebíb 'Agha's house. There is something irresistibly absurd to the European traveller for the first time riding out of a town preceded by his guard and a couple of fellows beating a monotonous sound out of a pair of bad kettle-drums. It was with some difficulty, under such circumstances, that we could compose our risible faculties so as to act our parts with due and proper decorum, while the shopkeepers and passengers in the bazaars stood in respectful attitudes and received the salutes to which they were entitled. I was not sorry, when, outside the date-groves, the musicians announced their intention of returning into town. On the receipt of a small "bákhshísh," they hastened to the bosom of their families, while we made for the heart of the desert.

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CHAPTER IX.

From Hillah into the Desert—Sand-drifts—Bridge-building—The Surly Sheikh, and his Black Slave—Coffee-making—Rhubarb and Blue Pill—New Year 1850.

DIRECTING our course towards the ruins of Niffar, our first two days' journey was, for the most part, across a level and sandy desert, intersected by an infinity of ancient water-courses, whose streams had centuries back ceased to flow, their very existence being sometimes only faintly indicated by the darker colour of the soil, arising from the salts contained in it. Now and then a low mound or a few fragments of pottery, bricks, and glass, assisted us to beguile the time by speculations and discussions on the former inhabitants of the land, and in making comparisons between the past and present. Like Paley's watch on the heath, what reflections may not a fragment of pottery stir up! In this manner, and in taking careful notes and observations of the route, the hours passed rapidly, and we fully enjoyed the novelty of the scene before us in that deserted and barren plain—for so it may be called, because the inhabited and cultivated spots are so few and far between, in comparison with the wide expanse of rich land uninhabited and uncultivated, throughout Mesopotamia. Independently, however, of the strange associations called forth by bricks and pottery, the journey was delightful, from the very uncertainty attending its course, from the excitement of

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knowing that an unexplored region lay before us, and from the enjoyment of the pure freshness of the desert air after the recent rain. Even the scanty Arab tents—although presenting the usual scene of squalid filth, and (as one is disposed to conceive) consequent misery—had some variety in their character and disposition. Determined on being pleased with anything, it would have been a sad pity if we had been disappointed.

The only point worthy of notice during the first day's journey was a remarkable range of low sandhills, which alter their form according to the direction of the wind. It has been conceived that their presence is due to springs of water below the surface; but Mr Layard offers another explanation. During his journey in 1850–51, across this region, he mentions having passed two or three places where the sand, issuing from the earth like water, is called "Aioun-er-rummel," sand-springs.* I observed no such phenomenon; but consider these hills as the vanguard of those vast drifts which, advancing from the south-east, threaten eventually to overwhelm Babylon and Bághdád. Further in the interior, these drifts are largely developed, and spread over large tracts of country not occupied by the marshes. They are temporarily arrested at this particular locality by the decayed stumps of numerous tamarisk bushes, that project and appear to be the nuclei around which the drifts accumulate.

The advancing and destructive progress of the sand is seen at the little hamlet of Báshíyya, about five miles farther. The square walls of an enclosure gave shelter and security to a few families, who supplied us, during our first night's encampment, with fowls and milk—the usual luxuries of Arab life. A large grove of date-trees, also surrounded by walls, flourished along the bank of an old canal-bed, and shaded an old Arab tomb. The term

* "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 546.

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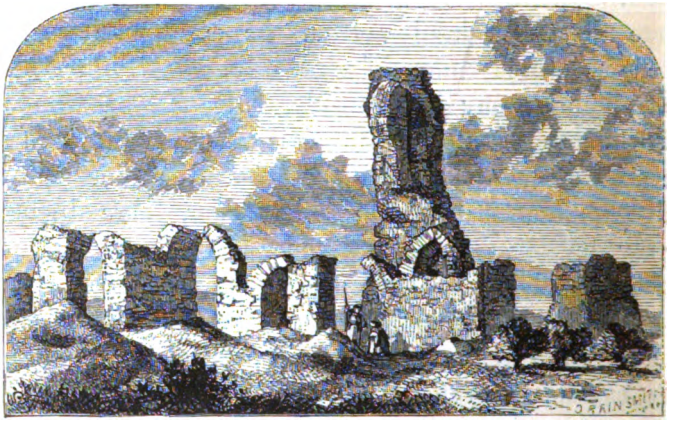
"khithr" (verdure) is peculiarly appropriate to spots where a patch of green, or even a single tree, relieves the dull monotony and continued glare of a desert soil—and it is therefore frequently applied to these oases.

On subsequently visiting Báshíyya, in January 1854, a great change had come over it; the sands, drifting from the south-east, had produced a desolation as imposing as that of Nineveh or Babylon. Its inhabitants were gone, the walls were barely visible above mounds of sand, the canal courses were utterly extinguished, and the date-trees rapidly dying from the lack of necessary moisture.

The invasion of this drift-sand is also observable at Nílíyya,* about nine miles east from Báshíyya. This



Mohammedan Ruins at Nílíyya.

famous Arab city is mentioned by 'Abúl-Fedah as existing in his time upon the great canal of Níl, from which it

* During my journey in 1854, through the Jezíreh, in charge of the expedition sent out under the auspices of the Assyrian Excavation Society, I visited these ruins in company with Messrs Lynch and Boutcher. They were of great size, but so concealed under the sand-drifts that it was impossible to ascertain their full extent. The principal buildings remaining, are a few fragments of an old mosque, and some piers of a bridge over the

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took its name. In 1848, the sand began to accumulate around it, and in six years the desert, within a radius of six miles, was covered with little undulating domes, while the ruins of the city were so buried that it is now impossible to trace their original form or extent. This feature is to be expected in a low flat country, recently (in a geological point of view) reclaimed from the sea, as we know to have been the case with Chaldæa.

For the next few days, pointed or domed buildings, erected over the bones of some imám (holy man, or influential chief), served at intervals for marks to guide our path, being of infinite value to the traveller in these deserts. They indicate likewise that a much larger population obtained in comparatively modern times. During two days' journey from Hillah, several of these white tombs dot the horizon, and are known by the name of the saint buried at each, such as Imám Khithr, Imám Ashjerí.

The son of the sheikh at Báshíyya undertook to guide the party to the tents of Sheikh Mulla 'Alí, to whom we carried letters from Táhir Bey. A vast inundation from the Shúmelí Canal, derived from the Euphrates, obliged us to make a considerable detour before reaching the bridge by which all traffic is carried on. It proved to be a single date log thrown across the stream; but it afforded such a precarious footing, that the first mule

bed of the Níl, which passed through the centre of the city. There was no appearance of any relics earlier than the Mohammedan era; if such exist, they are buried under the more modern débris. Seen from Nílíyya are the following mounds:—

Zibbar, four miles distant, bearing	21°	35′
El Meherí,	48	10
El Bershíeh,	64	45
Níshán Mírán, two ruined buildings,	123	10
El Khitheríat, two ruined buildings,	131	30
Habil-í-Sakr, a large ruin of black stone, said to be six or seven hours from Bágdádíeh, on the Tigris.	41	0

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on attempting to cross slipped and fell sideways on the bank. The cook's stores, onions and lemons, pots and kettles, were seen floating in joint fellowship down the canal. My people and the Bashí Bázúks endeavoured to raise the prostrate beast, but to no purpose. A few Arabs from the adjoining tents gathered round, but shewed no disposition to assist, until the soldiers had recourse to their whips, and thus secured a few *volunteers*. The mule raised, they were next set to repair their own bridge, which otherwise would have been allowed to rot. Several labourers returning from the plough were also *gently* pressed into the service. In a quarter of an hour the bridge was completed, by laying a second date log parallel with the first—a quantity of camel's thorn being then thrown down as a foundation, and loose earth placed on the top.

When all were safely across, we soon reached the large encampment of Mulla 'Alí, whose great black tents spread along the bank of the canal. Our arrival was the signal for the gathering of a crowd, and we were regarded somewhat in the light of monkeys or dancing dogs in a rural English village. The amazement and curiosity of the Arab community was great while they *pawed* the strange garments of the Firenghís, and expressed odd notions concerning their make and fabric. The little naked children seemed to partake of the general excitement. After a steady survey of a few seconds, the youthful fry, with their stomachs swelled to deformity from eating rice, and their mouths besmeared with dates, scampered off to relate their impressions to their mothers, who, afraid of the evil eye, scrutinized our persons and movements from behind the recesses of their tents.

Having a long journey before us, we did not dismount: in fact, it was useless to do so; the sheikh being a very old man, and on the point of death. I therefore merely

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requested that a guide might accompany us to the next encampment on the road to Niffar. In due time four Arabs were added to the party, and we travelled onwards to the camp of Sheikh Sáid. In the east, at the distance of about ten miles, a great mass of unbaked brickwork, the ancient mound of Zibliyya,* shone brightly against the setting sun.

Darkness overtook the party before arriving at the camp of the sheikh, conveniently situated near the tomb of an imám, on the verge of the great Affej marshes. The sheikh himself, a tall, stout, short-necked bull of a fellow, with a decided enlargement of one eye, which gave a very sinister expression to his countenance, advanced to the entrance of his tent to bid us welcome, and invited us to take a seat at his fire while our own tents were being pitched. We were accordingly ushered in. Two exceedingly greasy pillows of striped silk were placed on an equally dirty fragment of Turkey carpet, and we were duly installed into the seats of honour. As we entered, fresh fuel was added to the blazing fire upon the ground, producing a smoke so dense, that our eyes, not having served an apprenticeship in such an atmosphere, were completely blinded, and we remained for some time in utter ignorance of the sort of den we were in. When at length my vision had in some measure overcome the pungency of the smoke and penetrated through its density, I discovered that we sat under a huge black goats'-hair tent, sixty feet long and twenty feet broad, supported in the centre by poles fourteen feet high. The sides were all pegged closely to the ground, so that the only means

* I likewise visited Zibliyya in 1854. It appears to be an edifice, measuring forty-four paces square at the base, and fifty feet high, raised upon a low mound of similar construction. From the relics discovered around, it probably belongs to the Parthian era. Mr Layard visited Zibliyya in 1851, —the year following the journey above described,—and it is mentioned at page 569 of his "Nineveh and Babylon."

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of exit for the smoke were through the entrance and the wide meshes of the tent itself. Rather less than one-third of the space was partitioned off by a screen of the same black stuff. This was the private apartment of the sheikh and his family, although I could perceive no bright eyes of Araby maids peering at us from behind it. As soon as our seats were taken, numerous dusky forms stalked in, made a haughty sálaam, and took their several places in silence on the ground around the fire. It was impossible to resist a smile as we surveyed the group and observed ourselves to be the focus of their attraction. A hundred black eyes, with every expression from utter astonishment to utter rascality, stared at us uninterruptedly, from fifty heads, stretched forward from the bodies to which they severally belonged, the better to examine our strange physiognomies and still stranger garments. Each soon began to make personal remarks in a whisper to his neighbour, or expressed them openly for the benefit of the assembled divan. Never had I before seen such a levee of savages—villany, deceit, and crime appeared to be the distinguishing characteristics of their features. This is the result of oppression. How different were these Mádán Arabs from the free and noble Bedouin, who treats the Turkish pasha as an equal!

My first visit to a large Arab tent prepossessed me in favour neither of Arab cleanliness nor of Arab hospitality, as the event will shew. In due time there appeared a nearly naked black slave, with legs and arms so lengthy and disproportioned that he might have been a resuscitated figure from the temples of Rameses or Amenophis! Stalking up to the fire, he commenced the important operation of preparing coffee. He first arranged in line a series of coffee-pots, of every size from the great grandfather of coffee-pots, black with age and fire, to the

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infant coffee-pot just made, and bright from the hands of the tinman. Then came the *pater-familias*—a huge old fellow, wrapped up in the most careful manner in an old piece of abba stuff. As the káwájí unwound the numerous dirty folds, I was at a loss to conceive the meaning of all this care, but it eventually proved that *pater-familias* was the receptacle into which were collected the dregs and leavings of all the great coffee drinkings of the Kerbúl tribe from time immemorial. This was placed on the fire, and the operator, in the most theatrical manner, then bared his arms and legs, tucked his abba under him, and commenced the scientific process of roasting and pounding. A large iron utensil, having some relationship to a gigantic spoon on three legs, was next produced, and also put upon the fire. The negro then thrust his hand into some inscrutable corner of his robe and drew forth a small bag, from which he extracted two handfuls of coffee-berries, looking round at the same time, as much as to say, "You observe they're genuine Mocha!" These he threw into the capacious spoon, and continually turned them over with a flat shovel until the aromatic flavour, permeating through the tent to the olfactories of every person present, pronounced them to be duly roasted. Then the berries were pounded in a wooden mortar with a copper pestle—and here it was that the negro exhibited his skill, as he rang out various notes in the most scientific and artistic manner from the rude instruments on which he performed. When sufficiently pulverized, the coffee was confided to the great grandfather of pots, and a quantity of the delectable fluid above mentioned was poured upon it. Then all the family of coffee-pots took their turn at boiling it until the infant in his juvenile brightness had performed his part, and the negro skeleton advanced to present a cup of the beverage for my consideration.

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The behaviour of the sheikh was, however, so extraordinary during all the above process, that it was evident we were not welcome guests. From the time of our arrival, he kept giving a continued succession of orders to his servants, in an unpleasant manner and flustering voice, turning his back most uncivilly upon his guests, and scarcely deigning to answer the few questions which were addressed to him. In order to shew we were aware of his incivility, and also offended by it, we rose when the coffee was handed, took a haughty leave of the astonished sheikh, and retired to our tents, which were by that time ready for our reception. This movement had the desired effect. We had scarcely reached our tents when, as anticipated, the sheikh followed. He was received very coldly, and scarcely received a reply to his oft-repeated question—"Wallah! Beg, what is the matter?" At last he added, "I hope you are not offended. I should not have treated you so ill, but I did not understand who you were!" He then begged us to forget what had occurred, and to take coffee with him, which was brought before he received a reply. Having reduced the uncivil fellow to reason, it was unnecessary to take further notice of the intentional insult we had received. I therefore accepted his coffee; after which he became communicative, and endeavoured to make himself agreeable.

He was not long in asking if either of us were an hekím, or doctor, and if we possessed any medicine. His gross body had an enormous boil on an indescribable portion of his carcass, for which he required some remedy, and begged so energetically, that I at length agreed to give him a blue pill and a dose of rhubarb, but I quite forgot to see him swallow the former. Most probably it was wrapped in a dirty rag, and laid aside among his treasures until some of his friends might be ill, when, whether the malady were fever or cholera, a spear wound or dysentery,

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the sheikh would produce his supposed talisman for all ills, and, possibly, kill his patient.

As to our visiting Niffar, he recommended our going forward to the next encampment of the Affej tribe, which was nearer to the ruins; but, as I was desirous of spending New Year's day on the mounds, I endeavoured to persuade him to furnish us with guides. After presenting various obstacles, he at length agreed that his son and four horsemen should accompany us. There was no further cause, for the night at least, to complain of incivility or want of attention. Ourselves, servants, and animals were supplied with every requisite which an Arab camp can furnish.

The New Year of 1850 was ushered in with a fog so dense that the sheikh again endeavoured to dissuade us from our purpose, but, being determined on the subject, we started as arranged overnight. We rode for about an hour, while the sheikh's son continually urged me to give up my visit till another opportunity, and I began to suspect that he never intended we should reach Niffar. I was at length confirmed in this view by discovering our own tracks on the ground, and that we had been led a complete circuit round Sheikh Sáid's camp! I was naturally highly incensed at this conduct, and, on the guides declaring it impossible to reach the ruins and return before dark, I required them to conduct me to Shkyer, the abode of a sheikh of that name, brother of Aggáb, chief of the Affej. I had afterwards reason to know that Sheikh Sáid was at feud with the tribes between his camp and Niffar: hence his great unwillingness to aid us in visiting the ruins. On reaching within half a mile of Shkyer, our guides left us to introduce ourselves to the amphibious inhabitants of the Affej marshes.

Hitherto our journey had been through the districts of the Zobeid Arabs and their tributaries. Their chief, who farmed the revenues for the pasha, boasted of a Turkish

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title to his name, and was called the Wádí Bey. In consequence, however, of his oppressive conduct and extortionate demands, the tribes over whom he ruled—for they included others besides the Zobeid—were continually in rebellion. They complained, and with justice, that the Wádí robbed them and debauched their families, leaving neither food nor honour for themselves. In making known their complaints to the pasha, they exclaimed, "Send soldiers, slay us, cut off our heads, we will not obey him any longer." In consequence of these complaints, the Wádí Bey had recently been deposed by Abdí Pasha, and was then in prison at Músseib to answer the charges brought against him. It was generally understood that the pasha intended taking the government of the tribes into his own hands—an arrangement which appeared to be perfectly satisfactory to the ill-used Arabs. Great jealousy and mistrust reigned, however, among the various neighbouring tribes during the interregnum, and it was on this account that the son of Sheikh Sáid refused to accompany us into the village of Shkyer. Before reaching it, we experienced the awkwardness of travelling among marshes. Our animals were slipping and sliding about, out of one buffalo track into another, and had the greatest difficulty in keeping on their feet. An hour's scrambling in this way at length brought us to the village, where we were honourably and hospitably received by the aged Sheikh Shkyer and his numerous sons.

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CHAPTER X.

The Mighty Marsh—The Reed-Palace—Shooting-match—Niffar—Theory on the Chaldæans—Probable Ethiopic Origin—Niffar, the Primitive Calneh, and Probable Site of the Tower of Babel—Beni Rechâb, the Rechabites of Scripture.

We had now reached the commencement of those immense marshes which extend almost uninterruptedly to the Persian Gulf, and which, as I have previously said, cause the country under their influence to be a complete *terra incognita*. The swamps occupied by the Affej Arabs stretch, during the low season, from the Euphrates on the west, into the very heart of the Jezíreh, and in some places even join those of the Tigris. It is impossible to state their area; but it is calculated that they support a population of 3000 families, who pay an annual tribute of 100,000 piastres (above £900) to the Pasha of Bághdád. Abdí Pasha, however, thinking they were able to bear a considerable increase of taxation, proposed to double the above sum for the following year. The Affej were in no small state of fermentation and alarm—complaining bitterly of the treatment they had at various times received from the authorities of Bághdád. Nedjib Pasha had thrice blown their fragile towns about their ears with cannon. These consist entirely of reed huts, the reeds being tied in large bundles, and neatly arched overhead. This primitive construction is covered externally with thick matting, impervious to rain. The riches

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of the Affej are indicated by rows of huge reed cylindrical baskets, containing the grain upon which they subsist. Rice is produced in great abundance along the edges of the marsh; but the whole of their fields were, at the season of our visit and for a third of the year, entirely under water. Communication is kept up, as on the marshes of the Hindíeh, by means of long, sharp, pointed terrádas, constructed of teak, and measuring twelve or fourteen feet long, by a yard in width. The Affej tribe is divided into two nearly equal parts, governed by two brothers, Aggáb and Shkyer—the former being the accredited head of the whole.

We were conducted to the múthíf, or reception-hut of the chief, which resembled the other habitations of the place, but was of gigantic size, forty feet long, and eighteen feet high. It boasted the almost fabulous age for a reed building (if the Arabs might be credited) of no less than half a century, and appeared likely to last as long again, but its interior was black with soot and smoke from the fire which invariably burned under the arch, and had no means of exit but the entrance facing the marsh. After sitting a short time in this primitive palace, the sheikh himself, an old man of seventy on crutches, came to welcome us; three of his sons having, in the interim, done the honours of hospitality. The manly and open countenances of the Affej are remarkably striking, and differ so much from those of the Zobeid that they are at once pronounced to be of another origin. Their rich scarlet dresses —for the Affej are great dandies—and brightly striped keffiehs produced a remarkably brilliant and gay scene as they sat with their backs against the sides of the long múthíf. The manners of the Affej are much more prepossessing and polished than the other tribes of the Jezíreh.

In approaching the reed town, along the edge of the marsh, my companion had dismounted to shoot a fran-

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colin, and his fame as a flying-shot spread far and near. Such a prodigy had never before been seen among the Affej marshes. The double-barrelled gun was handed round the múthíf, and examined amid exclamations of surprise and delight; but the percussion caps were a complete puzzle to the whole assemblage. The springs of the powder-flask and shot-belt were equally a source of astonishment. A shooting-match was proposed; and shortly afterwards, Churchill and Mohammed, the sheikh's eldest son, were skimming about on the marsh in a narrow terráda, the depth of the water generally not exceeding three feet. The Englishman fired six times to the Arab's once, amidst rounds of applause and loud clapping of hands. The powder and shot of the latter were separately weighed in a rude scale, from one end of which was suspended a piece of lead, and from the other a hollow reed closed at one extremity; the process of loading his heavy unwieldy gun was therefore long and tedious; and the result of his day's sport anything but satisfactory to his self-esteem. The wondrous performance of my fellow-traveller spread far and near; and, four years afterwards, they reminded me of the manner in which he brought down the flying birds. The shooting-match is a subject of conversation to this day.

In the course of the day our guide, Múbárek, who, it will be remembered, was engaged to conduct us and secure our safety during the journey, was recognized by the Arabs couching in a dark corner of one of the tents, as a Bedouin thief, notorious for stealing by night. His tribe, too, was at blood-feud with the Affej. Had it not been that he was attached to my party, his life would have paid the penalty of his temerity in venturing among his enemies. Well knowing this, he did not therefore dare to shew his face outside the tent all the time of my stay at Shkyer.

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It is altogether beyond the comprehension of an Arab that a person should travel several days for the mere purpose of gratifying his curiosity by the sight of an ancient mound—they are always under the impression that a search for treasure is the true but concealed object; and it is next to an utter impossibility to shake this belief.

From some cause or other, the ruins of Niffar appear to be an object of peculiar dread to the Arabs; the inhabitants of Shkyer exhibited the same disinclination to accompany us as Sheikh Sáid's people had previously done. Before quitting Bághdád, I had been warned that difficulties of every kind would be thrown in my way, and that I should be very fortunate in succeeding. After a long conversation to no purpose, I declared my determination to set out for Niffar alone, if the sheikh would not oblige me by sending a guide. It was thereon arranged that his second son, Búláth, and a few horsemen of the tribe, should be ready at day-dawn.

We were up betimes on the following morning, but the promised escort was by no means ready. It was then for the first time explained that the whole tribe could not muster more than three horses—buffaloes they had in plenty, but they were not available for such a ride as was before us. It was therefore necessary to accommodate them with our own animals; and at length, after considerable delay, the party started from the village. The expedition consisted of ourselves, young Sheikh Búláth, two servants, six Bashí Bázúks, and six Arabs. The road being, as a matter of course, pronounced insecure, we were armed to the teeth, and might easily have been mistaken for a plundering party, instead of antiquarians on our way to visit an old ruined city. Once free from the mud and water of the marshes, we hastened over the

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plain at a merry rate, in order to have time at the mounds. We were assured that the way was long, and truly so we found it. In order to avoid the marsh on the south of us, it was necessary to make a detour of at least seventeen miles. Several considerable mounds, and various old canals, were crossed—one of which, bearing directly from Ziblíyya, was of considerable size, and must have been a main stream. It was called Derb-el-Jabábara,* or "the Giant's road." The Euphrates is described by the Arab historian, Abúl-Fedah, as in his time striking off from the modern channel immediately above the mound of Bábel at Babylon. Its sunken bed may still be traced on the west of the red pile of El Heimar, which some authors include within the circumference of the great city of Nebuchadnezzar. Its course terminated in the Tigris above Kút-el-'Amára, the ancient Apamea. A main artery, derived from the old Euphrates near the city of Nílíyya, flowed southwards towards Niffar. Its channel is now, however, lost in the marshes at the base of the mounds, but is again traceable near Warka. The waters had but recently retired from the surface of the desert, and our horses sank deep into the soft and yielding soil.† On approaching a hollow among the ruins, we came suddenly upon two or three Zobeid shepherds and their flocks, who, notwithstanding the assurance of our friendly disposition, made a precipitate retreat to their distant tents.

As Niffar is supposed to stand upon the northern confines of Chaldæa, it will not be out of place here to give

* The word "jabbar," or "giant." is the particular title used in the Hebrew Scripture as applied to Nimrod. The name occurring at Niffar is an additional reason why the reputed antiquity of the site should be regarded as authentic.

† The best approach to Niffar is from the Tigris, on which side the ground is firm; but the distance is great, and the desert entirely without water. Sir Henry Rawlinson, I believe, twice visited Niffar from that direction, and placed it in latitude 32° 7′ 3″ N.

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briefly an account of its early inhabitants, and their origin—as far, at least, as our present knowledge concerning them will admit of. The Chaldæans are alluded to in the Bible under various conflicting denominations. At one time they are spoken of as colonists ;* at another as priests and astrologers ;† and, lastly, as a conquering nation from the north.‡ Hence has arisen a diversity of opinion as to who and what they were.

The recent researches made in the interpretation of the primitive cuneiform inscriptions have led to the not inconsistent belief, that, in the earliest ages previous to the historic period (which commenced with the empire of Nimrod), the region on the north of the Persian Gulf was probably inhabited by a Semitic race, which was gradually dispossessed by a powerful stream of invasion or colonization from the south. The Hamitic or Scythic element, which prevails in the most ancient cuneiform records throughout Babylonia and Susiana, points to Ethiopia as the mother country of the new settlers. They appear to have crossed the Red Sea and the peninsula of Arabia, leaving traces of their migration along the shores of the Persian Gulf. In the language of the inscriptions, they are called "Akkadim"—a name preserved in one of their cities, the Accad of Genesis—and their first settlements are concluded to have been Erech and Ur, the modern sites of which are represented by the ruins of Warka and Múgeyer. The existence of a Hamite race in this region is confirmed by Herodotus,§ who distinguishes the Eastern Ethiopians of Asia from the Western Ethiopians of Africa by the straight hair of the former and the curly hair of the latter. Homer‖ speaks of them as "a divided race—the last of men—

* Genesis xi. 31 ; xii. 1–4 ; xv. 7.
† Daniel i. 4 ; ii. 2 ; iv. 7 ; v. 7–11.
‡ Jer. x. 22 ; Hab. i. 6, &c.
§ Book vii. 69, 70.
‖ Odyss., i. 22.

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some of them at the extreme west, and others at the extreme east." Memnon, who aided Priam against the Greeks at the siege of Troy, is mentioned as an Ethiopian; but his seat of empire was at Susa, which was called, after him, "the Memnonium."

In the name of *Kudur-Mapula*, who had the title of "ravager of Syria," Sir Henry Rawlinson identifies the *Chedorlaomer* of Scripture.* In his father's name, *Sinti-Shil-Khak*, and in that of *Tirkhak* on the Susa records, the last element, *khak*, is in all probability the *hak* or *hyc* of the shepherd-kings who overran Lower Egypt B.C. 2084.

These coincidences are, to say the least, very extraordinary, and certainly denote a common origin between the Chaldæans of Scripture and the Eastern Ethiopians.

At this distance of time it is, of course, impossible to define the original limits of Chaldæa, but it seems probable that, from a minute settlement at first, the dominion of the Chaldees extended over the lower plains of the great rivers into the mountains of Elymais and Media, Hamitic dialects being recognised in the rock inscriptions of Mál Amír in Persia, westward to Málatía in the centre of Asia Minor, and as far north as the lakes of Ván and Urúmia.

With the rise of the Assyrian power in the thirteenth century B.C., the Semitic races appear to have in turn gained the ascendency, and spread over the low countries; at the same time, the language gradually acquired a Semitic character, but still maintained an admixture of Hamitic roots. Into the mountainous region, however, the Semites found difficulty in penetrating, and it is doubtless to the Hamites still dwelling there, retaining all their warlike propensities, and constituting the flower of the Babylonian army, that the Jewish Scriptures

* Genesis xiv.

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refer when they say, "I will bring evil from the north, and a great destruction,"* meaning the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, "king of the Chaldees."†

But it is in a more restricted sense that Isaiah‡ alludes to "the Chaldeans, whose cry is in their ships"—a people of aquatic habits and maritime position, agreeing well with the descriptions given by Ptolemy§ and Strabo,‖ of a people bordering on Arabia and the Persian Gulf, and into the marshes of whose territories, according to Pliny,¶ the Tigris emptied itself in its course to the sea. From these authorities we are led to conclude, that Chaldæa Proper extends from about the latitude of Hillah to the Persian Gulf, and from the verge of the great Arabian deserts on the west, across the plains and marshes of the Mesopotamian rivers, to the parallel of Háwíza on the confines of ancient Susiana.

With regard to the language of this early people, whether we call them Hamites, Scyths, or Chaldees, I cannot do better than quote from the writer of an interesting article in a recent periodical:**—

"They were in reality the inventors of the cuneiform character, having first made rude pictures of natural objects, after the manner of hieroglyphs, which in process of time assumed the form of letters, possessing a phonetic power, and having some correspondence with the title of the original object which they were intended to represent. It seems likely that this alphabet had been in use at least a thousand years before it was employed to represent the sounds of a language like the Assyrian, differing wholly in structure and character from that for which it was originally invented. Hence it happened, that when the Semitic people began to make this use of

* Jer. iv. 6. † 2 Chron. xxxvi. 17. ‡ Chap. xliii. 14.
§ Book vi. 20. ‖ Book i. 4. ¶ Book vi. 27.
** Notice of Colonel Rawlinson's researches in "The Monthly Review of Literature, Science, and Art," vol. i. page 45.

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it, they found it necessary to retain the old Scythic values of the letters, and therefore only modified the existing alphabet in such a manner as to give to each character the power which belonged to the Semitic synonym for the original Scythic term." The science of Assyria, even to the latest times, appears to have been recorded in the old Hamite language, so that the acquisition of this tongue was regarded as an essential part of Assyrian education.

At the present day, it is well known there are some tribes in the highlands of Kúrdistán called Kaldání, or Chaldæans, who profess Christianity, and are a brave, hardy race. One theory concerning their origin is, that they are the descendants of the original inhabitants of Chaldæa, who were driven into those fastnesses by the after-spread of the Semitic races.*

The original colonists are, it is supposed, alluded to by Moses under the name of "Nimrod," which signifies "those who are found," or, "the settlers." Their Hamitic descent is confirmed by the application of the name Cush (the father of Nimrod), under various modifications, to different sites in the territory north and east of Babylonia—for instance, Shúsh, Cútha, Kúshasdan, Shúster, Cossœa, &c.

The frequent mention of the Chaldæans as priests and astrologers may be accounted for by their having brought with them, in their migration, a knowledge of the sciences at that time far advanced in Egypt. Hence it was that

* The various theories advanced concerning the Chaldæans have been so frequently quoted in other recent works, that I refrain from a repetition of them in this volume. The reader may, therefore, be referred to Baillie Fraser's "Mesopotamia and Assyria," and Vaux's valuable *résumé* of modern discoveries, entitled "Nineveh and Persepolis." The discussion in detail will be found in Faber's "Origin of Pagan Idolatry," Beke's "Origines Biblicæ," Bochart's "Geographia Sacra," Dr Grant's "Lost Tribes," and Ainsworth's reply, Michaëlis' "Specim. Geograph. Hebræor. Ext.," Layard's "Nineveh," &c. &c.

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there existed at Babylon in the time of Alexander the Great a record of eclipses which had taken place from the year 2234 B.C.*—a date nearly corresponding with that assigned to the commencement of Nimrod's empire as given in the marginal references of our Scriptures. We are also told by Strabo,† that the Chaldæans had two schools for the study of astronomy; whence the learned men were called Borsippeni and Orchoëni.

A further proof of the Egyptian origin of the Chaldees is derived from the fact, that, in addition to the ordinary lunar year, they made use of a solar one for astronomical purposes, which was divided, after the manner of the Egyptians, into monthly sections. The adoration of the heavenly bodies, which we know to have prevailed among the Hamite tribes, appears to have introduced a system of polytheism among the Semites, whose religion in its primitive state consisted in the worship of one supreme and omniscient Creator. This subject is not, however, one for me to investigate.

It may not be uninteresting at this point to state the opinion of Sir Henry Rawlinson on the important ruins of Niffar. He considers that "the names of the eight primeval cities, preserved in the tenth chapter of Genesis, are not intended to denote capitals then actually built and named, but rather to point out the localities where the first colonies were established by titles which became famous under the empire, and which were thus alone familiar to the Jews." He regards the site of Niffar as the primitive Calneh—the capital of the whole region. It was dedicated to Belus, and was called the city of Belus. Hence he concludes that this was the true site of the Tower of Babel; and that from it originated the Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar, on the banks of the Euphrates, at Hillah. The existing remains were built by the earliest king of whom

* On the authority of Berosus. † Book xvi. 739.

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we have any cuneiform monuments, about 2300 B.C., but whose name cannot be read with certainty. It was then called Tel Anu, from the god Anu, our scriptural Noah, who was worshipped there under the form of the Fish God Oannes, of whom we have representations on the bas-reliefs of Nineveh; the name Niffar was subsequently given to it. The old titles were retained when the Talmud was composed, the writers of which say that Calneh was Niffar, and they call the place Nineveh; but the Nineveh of Assyria was certainly at Mosul—"Out of that land went forth Ashur and builded Nineveh."*

The present aspect of Niffar is that of a lofty platform of earth and rubbish, divided into two nearly equal parts by a deep channel—apparently the bed of a river—about 120 feet wide. Nearly in the centre of the eastern portion of this platform are the remains of a brick tower of early construction, the *débris* of which constitutes a conical mound rising seventy feet above the plain. This is a conspicuous object in the distance, and exhibits, where the brick-work is exposed, oblong perforations similar to those seen at the Birs Nimrúd, and other edifices of the Babylonian age. The western division of the platform has no remarkable feature, except that it is strewed with fragments of pottery, and other relics of a later period than the tower above alluded to. At the distance of a few hundred yards on the east of the ruins, may be distinctly traced a low continuous mound—the remains, probably, of the external wall of the ancient city. As to the obelisk, the particular object of my visit, the Arabs positively declared that there was one, but none of them had seen it, or could indicate its position in the mounds.

* For the above notices on the origin of the Chaldæans and early history of Niffar, I am mainly indebted to Sir Henry Rawlinson's numerous memoirs, contained in the publications of the Royal Asiatic Society, in the "Proceedings of the Royal Geogr. Society for 1856," p. 47, and pages of the "Athenæum."

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It is unnecessary to dwell at greater length on these ruins, because Mr Layard has given a detailed account of his researches there in 1851.* I myself visited Niffar a second time in 1854, when his trenches were scarcely recognizable—in a year or two more they will be entirely filled up with drifted sand. Although no very remarkable discovery has yet been made at Niffar, it cannot be regarded as thoroughly explored; and the extensive area of the ruins encourages the hope that at some future period excavations may be successfully resumed.

On the west and south of Niffar there extends a region of marshes, hitherto unvisited—a complete chain of natural defences for the wild Mádán Arabs, who dwell among them upon the slightly elevated ridges which at intervals raise their heads above the inundation. It is entirely owing to the presence of these swamps that the tribes in the interior are so little under the dominion of the Turkish Government. Joining to the Affej district are the territories of the Beni Recháb,† whose independent chief, named the Amír or Prince, claims descent from the original possessors of the soil. He is the sworn ally of the great Muntefik sheikh; and when that tribe is at war, the followers of the Amír, with their long muskets, fight side by side with those of the modern King of the Arabs. The Beni Recháb are a remarkable race, and in them we may probably recognize the descendants of the Rechabites, who, in the days of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, were made an example to the Jews of a people who, unlike the chosen race, obeyed the precepts of their forefathers. When wine was placed before them in the temple by Jeremiah, they refused to partake of it, saying, "Thus have we obeyed the voice of Jonadab the son of Rechab our father in all that he charged us, to drink no

* "Nineveh and Babylon," chap. xxiv.

† Literally, "sons of the stirrup."

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wine all our days, we, our wives, our sons, nor our daughters; nor to build houses for us to dwell in: neither have we vineyard, nor field, nor seed: but we have dwelt in tents, and have obeyed, and done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. But it came to pass, when Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up into the land, that we said, Come, and let us go to Jerusalem for fear of the army of the Chaldeans, and for fear of the army of the Syrians: so we dwell at Jerusalem." *

It is by no means improbable that at the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar a few years later, the Rechabites were obliged to follow the fallen fortunes of their allies the Jews, and that the Chaldæan marshes were assigned to them as a residence in the land of their conquerors.† Their descendants are still to be found in the same locality, but instead of being a dependent, they have become an independent race. But whatever may have been the result of their intercourse with the Jews, the observance of their ancient customs remains unchanged, like that of all the wild Arab hordes. There is not sufficient proof, in the name alone, that the modern tribe of Beni Rechâb are the Rechabites of the Scriptures, but the tradition of their early possession of the country, the title of Amír so unusually applied to an Arab chief of this region, and the peculiarity of feature which distinguishes the tribe, certainly afford some ground for the opinion here advanced.

The Beni Rechâb are extremely jealous of strangers, as I once experienced, and it is not safe to venture among them without the Amír's protection. In countenance they

* Jer. xxxv. 8-11.

† Whether these Beni Rechâb are related to the tribe of the same name whom the Jewish traveller, Benjamin of Tudela, mentions as dwelling in the deserts of Yemen, and observing the precepts of the Talmud, I am unable to say. They may be divisions of the same tribe.

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bear a strong resemblance to the Jews, and may easily be distinguished from the surrounding Arab tribes; I am not aware, however, that they have any traditions of a former connexion with the Jewish nation. Unlike their affable neighbours of the Affej, they are sullen and morose, unwilling to give information, and infinitely more addicted to plunder than to any other occupation. The sway of the Amír extends from the Affej southwards to near the mounds of Hammám hereafter mentioned, and as far east as the Tigris, along the banks of which he exacts black-mail from all native vessels plying between Bághdád and Busrah, although he himself pays no tribute to the Turkish Government.

Among the marshes of the Bení Recháb are several important ruins, of which Bismya, distant about twenty-five miles south-east of Niffar, is the most remarkable. These two ancient sites, however, are separated by a great extent of marsh, so that Bismya is still unexplored. I have seen it at the distance of about ten miles, and, from its low but spreading outline, I believe it to be of very ancient origin. This form is, for the most part, common to mounds of remote age in Chaldæa, and proves that after-generations have not built upon the older remains.

Phára is another of the Bení Recháb mounds, abounding in small antiques, such as signet-cylinders, rude bronzes, and figures carved in stone. According to the Amír, such articles "flow like water" from the mound. It is consequently much resorted to by antique-hunters, who find a ready sale for their treasures among the Europeans at Bághdád. At Phára I obtained a very interesting Egyptian amulet.

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CHAPTER XI.

Díwáníyya—Camp of Abdí Pasha—Mulla 'Alí, the Merry Ogre—Sheep-skin Rafts—Statue-hunting—Hammám—Solemn Grandeur of Chaldæan Ruins—The Statue—Tel Ede—Alarm of the Arabs—First Impressions of Warka.

AFTER a minute inspection of the ruins of Niffar, we returned to Shkyer, which we reached before sunset.

Had it not been that we were the bearers of letters to Abdí Pasha, who was then at Díwáníyya, I should have made an effort to penetrate through the Beni Rechâb. As it was, however, our course lay south-eastward from Shkyer, encountering considerable difficulties by the way. The marsh was wide, and, although not generally deep, intersected by numerous streamlets from the Euphrates, which rendered the passage of the horses and baggage-mules no easy task. Sheikh Shkyer undertook that some of his people should conduct them by a circuitous route, so as to avoid the main inundation, but they were still obliged to ford in three feet water for an hour, and to swim across the deeper streams. The baggage and saddles were conveyed with ourselves in terrádas through the open marsh and straight long lanes or ditches of reeds, only sufficiently wide to admit of two boats passing each other. The reeds formed walls on either side to the height of twelve or fourteen feet, and excluded every breath of pure air.

The animals having at length joined us, we mounted,

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and traversed some groves of fine tamarisks to the little hamlet of Yúsúfíyya, surrounded by date-trees, upon the left bank of an important trunk stream of the same name. This canal, derived from the Euphrates a few miles above the town of Díwáníyya, conveys a deep flow of water into the interior for the purposes of irrigation in those localities where the elevation of the land is uninfluenced by the rise or fall of the marshes. The Yúsúfíyya, at about seventeen miles from its source, is divided into three parts —one of which, called the Shat-el-Káhr, falls into the marshes of the Shat-el-Hie, at the junction of that branch of the Tigris with the Euphrates. None of these streams are fordable, consequently the depth and width of the Yúsúfíyya is considerable. It is crossed in a rude boat at the village, beyond which Díwáníyya is an hour distant.

Our tents were pitched after sunset above the town, on the left bank of the Euphrates. The pasha, with a camp of 3000 men, was stationed on the opposite side, having just concluded one of those Sisyphian labours, previously mentioned, which each successive governor of Bághdád is obliged to undergo, namely, the reconstruction of the dam at the mouth of the Hindíeh. He was now stationed at Díwáníyya for the fourfold purpose of testing the result of his work, of arranging matters consequent on the Wádí Bey's deposition, of curbing the universal disposition to rebel against the Ottoman rule, and, lastly, of collecting arrears of tribute.

When daylight on the following morning revealed our position, the appearance of tents on the opposite side of the river caused a considerable stir in the camp of His Excellency: for it was beyond the comprehension of the Turks that ordinary travellers could surmount the supposed insuperable difficulties of the marshes; and—unless we had dropped from above—there was no other method by which we could have got there. Mes-

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senger after messenger arrived in kúfahs to satisfy the curiosity of their masters concerning the rank, quality, and destination of the new comers. In due time, having previously announced our arrival to the pasha, we crossed the river, and were received on landing by an officer in waiting. Instead, however, of conducting us to the presence of the pasha, he led us—probably bribed to do so—to the tent of Mulla 'Alí, the little eunuch and buffoon, of whom I have already spoken as possessing the confidence of the governor. His purpose, no doubt, was to satisfy himself on the objects of our journey, and the cause of our visit to the pasha.

Mulla 'Alí was originally a slave of a former pasha, but his antics and jokes were so effective that he obtained his freedom, and subsequently rose high in favour with 'Alí and Nedjib Pashas. It was impossible to guess his age, but, as he sat doubled up on a carpet, covered with a huge furred cloth tunic and an enormous dark-green turban, he was one of the most repulsive creatures which the eye could well encounter. His face more resembled that of the monkey tribe than anything else I can conceive. His mouth stretched nearly from ear to ear, and the latter appendages stood out from each side like those of an ass. Teeth he had none, so that his tongue, as if too large for his mouth, frequently lolled out, giving him the appearance of an idiot. His face, thin in the extreme, was

Mulla 'Alí.

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puckered into a thousand wrinkles, the bones projecting, and the skin of the colour and consistency of hard leather. The whole of his features were condensed into an expression of low cunning, cupidity, cruelty, and lust, which no one could behold without shuddering. His character did not belie his appearance. He was at one time made chief over certain Khuzeyl tribes, but his conduct was such that it was found necessary to remove him. Money was his chief object, and he extorted it without scruple. When he failed by the usual means, he tried torture, and took as much delight in the sufferings of his unfortunate victims as either Nero or Caligula. His favourite punishment was to bury an offender alive with his hands tied, leaving only his shaven head above ground, but this was smeared over with honey to attract reptiles and insects! The wretch took his pleasure in frequently going to grin and make faces at the poor victim, who, however, without food, and under an almost vertical sun, was soon relieved by death from the tortures and atrocities he suffered. It is difficult to comprehend how a man so kind and humane as Abdí Pasha could consent to the companionship of a creature so vile and abominable, but wherever he went, Mulla 'Alí accompanied him, whatever state-matter he had to transact, Mulla 'Alí was consulted. It is true that the eunuch was full of anecdote, and his drolleries made the staid pasha laugh in the midst of the most sober affairs, but that was no excuse for giving countenance to a creature who had lost all human feelings. However gross or insulting the buffoon's jests might be, the pasha was always ready with a hoarse laugh. On one occasion, I remember seeing Mulla 'Alí, like a huge toad, publicly spit upon the person of an European gentleman. The pasha, as usual, exercised his merriment; but in an instant afterwards looked serious, for it occurred to him that this was a matter beyond a joke.

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This paragon of ugliness and cruelty received his visitors without rising, merely motioning us to be seated on the carpet near him. Salutations and compliments were soon dispensed with, by his abruptly demanding in one breath, "where we had come from, where we were going, and what we wanted?" The answer appeared to amuse him exceedingly, for he burst forth into an inordinate fit of laughter, in which he was joined by his attendants, who gathered behind their master to ascertain the subject of gossip for the day. A more out-at-heel squad can seldom be seen. Every one grinned from ear to ear, in imitation of their master, at the very idea of two Englízí passing through the Mádán country, into which no Turk ever yet dared to venture—being pronounced beyond the pale of the pasha's authority. Mulla 'Alí became guinea-yellow with excitement at the bare possibility of such an attempt being successful, and at the greater probability of our being spitted on Arab spears. He told some horrid stories of cruelties perpetrated by the Mádán tribes; but these were so contrary to their nature, that I set them down as instances of his own barbarity. Not finding us disposed to believe all he said, he endeavoured to amuse his audience at our expense by turning round and remarking:—"What a pleasure it would be to hear that the Arabs had made donkeys of them!" The reply was, that "if the Arabs did so, he should not," and so we left him huddled up in his furs.

We found the Pasha of Bághdád sitting on the edge of a high bank overlooking the river, with that expression of utter stolidity which characterizes the Turkish features. Ask a grave old Turkish gentleman what he is thinking about, and his answer will invariably be, "By Allah! what should I think of? Nothing." So, doubtless, Abdí Pasha thought of "nothing" as our approach woke him from the slumber into which his cogitations had fallen.

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He received us graciously, but could by no means comprehend the object of our proposed journey on the eastern side of the Euphrates. As to Warka, or the region where it is situated, although within his own territories, he knew nothing whatever. The official map called for gave no further explanation; whereupon he seemed to conclude that Warka must be an exceedingly dangerous place, for he remarked in a decided manner, "You cannot go; I will not be answerable for your safety." Expostulation had little or no effect, and although I repeatedly released him from all responsibility, the same answer was returned—"It is impossible; you *must* travel with the troops and animals by way of Semáva." Seeing that no good could be effected by reasoning on the absurdity of his fears for our safety, I merely asked for a small party of Bashí Bázúks, in lieu of those who had brought us to Díwáníyya, and firmly stated my intention of continuing my journey as previously arranged at Bághdád. Having done so, I left him biting his lip and wondering at European obstinacy. My impression was, that he did not wish strangers to see the little authority he exercised over the tribes.

During the remainder of the day, the necessary preparations were made for entering an unknown region. Several skins were purchased to enable our crossing any streams and marshes which might fall in our way. The services of a Jebúr Arab Sheikh, called Máhmúd, whose camp lay on our route near the verge of the Amír's territories, were secured; and, early on the following morning, nothing was wanting but the promised escort. It was some time before the pasha could be prevailed on to conform to my wishes, but at length sixteen rudely equipped horsemen crossed the river, and we sallied forth from the groves of Díwáníyya in search of novelty and adventure, exulting at the result of continued obstinacy and determination.

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For three days our road lay across a level and uninteresting desert, at times interrupted by a detour to avoid a marsh, or by a halt to cross a broad and deep water-course. In such case the loads were unpacked, and the inflated sheep-skins tied to our tent-poles or branches of tamarisk—thus forming a primitive raft. Reeds were then placed on this framework in order to keep the passengers and luggage dry. In this manner all were floated across to the opposite side, while the horses and mules swam over. Sometimes, when the stream was very rapid, the kélek or raft was attached to a rope, and prevented from floating down the current.

One of the most important water-courses was the Fáwár, derived from the Yúsúfíyya, and terminating in the marshes on the banks of the Euphrates. The Fáwár, in its turn, gave off a considerable branch called the Túrunjíyya, which supplied some small kál'as and the cultivated land adjoining them. The Arab owners, however, declining the payment of their taxes, had endeavoured to shew their independence by destroying a dam so that the water of the Fáwár might be transferred to the channel of the Túrunjíyya, and subsequently into a marsh surrounding their abodes. Abdí Pasha had sent Mústapha Bey, the kyáya of Bághdád, with a large force to bring these refractory Arabs to reason. His first care was to close the mouth of Túrunjíyya with a strong dam of earth and brushwood, and afterwards to attack a fort to which the Arabs retreated. He was successful in his efforts, and took possession of the fort on the very day we passed—the defenders having decamped during the night, carrying with them all their goods and chattels.

We crossed the Fáwár at the ruins of a modern town called Súk-el-Fáwár (Fáwár Market), once a considerable and thriving place—the centre of a large district like Súk-esh-Sheioukh. It originally belonged to the

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Muntefik Arabs, and was surrounded at intervals by small martello towers, for defence against more unsettled neighbours.

I have already had occasion to allude to the effect produced by the destruction of the dam on the Euphrates above Babylon, at the mouth of the Hindíeh.* Nowhere is this effect better observed and understood than at Súk-el-Fáwár. In consequence of the breaking of that dam about twenty-five years ago, the water deserted the channels and streams on the east of the Euphrates. Súk-el-Fáwár, among other places, became a sufferer by the catastrophe, and was soon afterwards abandoned. Decaying date-trees, and ruins of well-built mud huts, extend half-a-mile along both sides of the channel, harbouring only wild beasts and reptiles. The pasha's recent work had restored a copious stream to the bed of the Fáwár, and water was flowing towards spots which had for many years been without moisture.

On the third day's journey from Díwánîyya, we reached a deep river-bed, now dry, called by the Arabs "Shkain," or "Es-Sáhain," which was said to have also become dry at the same time as the Fáwár. The great size of the channel, measuring 270 feet wide by 15 or 20 deep, shews its importance. Whether it had ever been the course of the Euphrates, it was difficult to decide on a casual examination. It is by no means improbable that it is a continuation of the ancient Níl, previously lost to sight in the marshes of Niffar. At any rate, its course singularly coincides in general direction with that of the Níl.

Parallel with our road could be traced the course of the Shat-el-Káhr—a continuation of the Yúsúfîyya—here and there indicated on our east by a mud fort or enclosure. Numerous small mounds, too, began to spring up in advancing southward, while the path was constantly

* See page 44.

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strewed with fragments of bricks and pottery. It was evident that we were approaching the seats of ancient civilization, and the neighbourhood of once populous cities. The further we proceeded, the more clearly was this manifested.

Our new guide, Máhmúd, having mentioned the existence of a large statue at a ruin named Hammám,* I determined on directing our course to the east of the road we were pursuing, in order to ascertain the truth of his account, because little reliance can usually be placed on Arab information upon such points. After passing several considerable mounds on either side, we at length, before sunrise on the morning of the fourth day's ride from Díwáníyya, caught a glimpse of the goal we sought.

I know of nothing more exciting or impressive than the first sight of one of those great Chaldæan piles looming in solitary grandeur from the surrounding plains and marshes. A thousand thoughts and surmises concerning its past eventful history and origin—its gradual rise and rapid fall—naturally present themselves to the mind of the spectator. The hazy atmosphere of early morning is peculiarly favourable to considerations and impressions of this character, and the gray mist intervening between the gazer and the object of his reflections, imparts to it a dreamy existence. This fairy-like effect is further heightened by mirage, which strangely and fantastically magnifies its form, elevating it from the ground, and causing it to dance and quiver in the rarefied air. No wonder, therefore, that the beholder is lost in pleasing doubt as to the actual reality of the apparition before him.

The ruins of Hammám measure about a mile in diame-

* The site of Hammám, "a bath," is believed by Sir Henry Rawlinson to represent the Gulaba of cuneiform inscriptions. See Proceedings of Royal Geographical Society for April 1856, p. 47.

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ter, and consist of a series of low undulations around a grand central tower, whose remarkable form cannot fail

Ruins of Hammám.

to attract attention. Owing to the falling away of the brickwork at its sides and base, and to the projection of its upper parts, this building has, in the distance, under the influence of mirage, the appearance of a gigantic mushroom. Its total height is about fifty feet, of which twenty is a conical mound supporting a mass of unbaked brickwork. Its original form has evidently been square, but the sides are now reduced to seventy-eight feet each, and the angles are rounded off. Judging by other ruins of similar character, and by the numerous broken fragments lying upon the sloping sides of the mound, it was probably faced externally with kiln-baked bricks. The most northerly angle points twenty degrees east of north. A deep channel, formed by the rains of winter, divides each side into equal parts, and leaves the angles projecting like four rounded turrets. The action of the weather, too, has likewise worn away these apparent towers, and

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exposed a layer of reeds at the summit of each. The bricks used in the construction of this edifice measure fourteen and a-half inches square by five, or five and a-half inches thick, and are composed of sun-dried clay, mixed with barley-chaff and chopped straw. Each row is separated by a layer of reeds, which project and shelter the bricks beneath them from the influence of the weather.

It is difficult to conceive the purpose of this and similar edifices throughout Babylonia, unless we assume them to have been platforms for the erection of temples, such as may be seen in a state of better preservation at Bírs Nimrúd and Múgeyer. That the ruin at Hammám was a portion of a temple devoted to the worship of a Chaldæan divinity, is moreover inferred from the statue which lay about two hundred yards from the north-west corner of the ruin; this bore all the characteristics of a sacred idol. Unfortunately it has suffered much from ill-usage, being not only broken, but otherwise maliciously defaced. According to the information of our guide, this interesting statue was perfect about two years previously, but was broken with large hammers by a tribe* who work in iron near Súk-esh-Sheioukh, in the expectation of finding gold in its interior. It had likewise been used as a target by the Arabs for ball-practice; but the fractures bore evidence of having been effected at an earlier period than my informant admitted.

* By this description must be implied the Sabæans or Christians of St John—a strange race of whom little is known. They are probably a relic of the old inhabitants of the country. I doubt their ability to break so large a block of stone; and it is not their custom to travel about with the large implements of their trade. My friend Professor Petermann, the eminent Oriental linguist and savant of Berlin, passed nearly the whole of the year 1854 at Súk-esh-Sheioukh among the Sábí. We may shortly expect some valuable information from his pen concerning them. A few families reside at Shúster and Dizfúl, where they are dreadfully persecuted by both Persians and Arabs. General Williams, with the humanity which distinguishes him, obtained a firman from the Sháh for their protection.

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This statue represents a male human figure, of the natural size and correct proportions, cut out of finely-grained black granite, and executed with remarkable skill. The torso is broken at the waist, where the hands are clasped in front, as if holding a garment thrown loosely over the left shoulder. The right shoulder is bare, with a defaced inscription in Babylonian characters cut upon it. The head* and arms are unfortunately gone. This fragment measures sixteen inches from the neck to the waist, and nineteen inches between the shoulders. The second piece, representing the lower part of the body, has been severed from the former, and measures two feet six inches. The surface is much broken; but upon the right hip and side there is another defaced inscription, bordered with a deep fringe similar to that represented on the Assyrian sculptures. The third and last fragment is a shapeless block, thirteen inches long and ten inches wide, polished on one side, and exhibiting a trace of garment fringe.

Statues of Babylonian workmanship being extremely rare, I packed the pieces in the best manner which circumstances would admit, and brought the awkward loads on the backs of our mules to Busrah, whence they were shipped for England. These fragments, I believe, are the only specimen of an undoubted Babylonian statue in Europe; but I am sorry to remark that they still lie neglected in the vaults of the British Museum.†

Want of time prevented my making a thorough examination of the other ruins of Hammám. As they do not appear to have been occupied by succeeding dynas-

* In the possession of Captain Lynch, C.B., I.N., is a very beautiful head of similar stone, which probably belongs to this statue, having been represented to him as obtained from this neighbourhood.

† In 1854 I obtained a similar, but smaller, statue from the neighbouring mound of Yokha, which was likewise sent to England.

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ties, they will probably afford valuable information concerning the Chaldæan period. If excavations are ever again undertaken in those regions, Hammám is one of those sites which deserves early attention.*

Within sight of Hammám, about six miles distant in the south-south-west, rises another lofty and imposing pile, called Tel Ede, or Yede. Towards it our course was next directed.

We had by this time reached the limits of the Muntefik territories, inhabited by the wildest of those Mádán tribes who acknowledge fealty to the great sheikh. As we advanced in a compact party, we were espied by a few Arab shepherds tending their flocks, which find excellent grazing on the short grass produced by the early rains among the sand-hills. Alarmed at the sight of so many horsemen, they took up their position on a small mound, elevated a black keffieh upon a spear, sang their war-cry, and danced like spirits demented. In a few minutes they were joined by others of their tribe, who joined in the song and dance, until they were almost lost to our sight in the dense cloud of dust created by their frantic evolutions. When they considered their numbers sufficiently strong, this half-naked band of savages—their abbas bound round their waists, their heads bare, and their long black locks flowing wildly in the breeze—formed in the most approved style of Arab array, and ran at a rapid pace, with spear and club in hand, to meet the supposed enemy.

The whole neighbourhood was in a state of the greatest excitement and alarm. The sheep and cattle were being driven towards the tents for protection;

* When I passed through the country a second time in 1854, it was my intention to have commenced operations at Hammám on behalf of the Assyrian Excavation Society; but the want of water in the Shat-el-Káhr, which flows within a few miles of these ruins, compelled my seeking a more eligible locality.

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the women collected in numbers together upon the mound which their heroes had just quitted, urging them on to brave deeds by their shrill and constant tahlehl—a sound intermediate between a halloo, a whistle, and a scream, which rings through the nerves like a galvanic shock. The warriors approached us in admirable order, as if they had passed through many a field-day, and were quite prepared to do or die, as brave hearts should, in defence of their ladies fair. Arranging themselves in two long lines, at equal intervals apart, in number about sixty, they then advanced, in New Zealand fashion, with a kind of running dance, chanting their war-song, and throwing their weapons high into the air, to catch them again, with inimitable dexterity, in their descent. They were apparently led by an old man with a luxuriant white beard, who sang the solo parts, and was otherwise exceedingly active in the whole business. Máhmúd rode forward to explain that we came in peace, and not in war; whereupon the announcement was received with a yell of indescribable expression. One of our horsemen foolishly fired a pistol while they danced round about our party, which added tenfold to the general excitement. Positive exhaustion alone obliged them to desist. Then came inquiries and explanations, which resulted in their insisting on our taking up our quarters for the night at their encampment, shewing that genuine hospitality to strangers which does so much honour to the Arab character. They would take no excuse, and, seizing the bridles of our horses, were about to drag us thither with good-humoured force. I was not, however, inclined to forego my visit to Tel Ede, and therefore entered into an amicable arrangement, by which they agreed to conduct the mules and baggage to their tents, while we rode forward to the ruins.

The great pile of Tel Ede much disappointed my ex-

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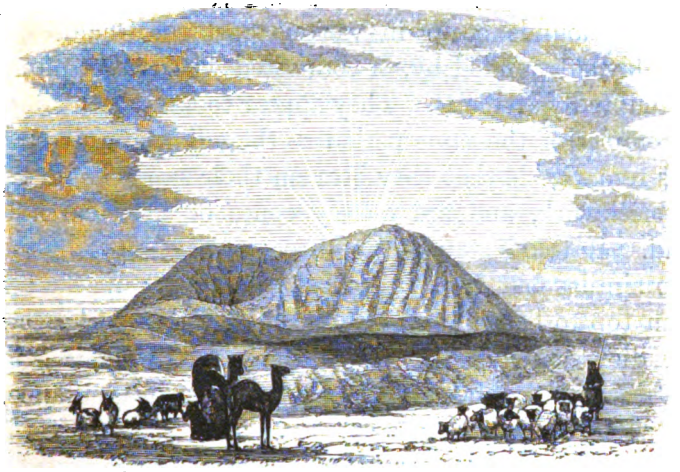
pectations. It is a huge artificial mass of solid sand, ninety feet high, the circumference of its base measuring



Tel Ede.

2500 feet. Its form is irregular, and its largest diameter from north-west to south-east. Its highest point is at the north-west. The south-west face is steep and inaccessible; while that on the opposite side is furrowed by deep rain-channels. The north-west side is much weathered, and exhibits a section of its compact sandy mass.* The effect of rain and wind is to cut large holes deeply into the surface. The long ridge-like ranges of small mounds at its north-east base are covered with the usual relics —such as fragments of bricks, pottery, and glass—but they are still unexamined by the spade, and await the investigation of some future adventurer.

At first sight, I was almost induced to consider Tel Ede a continuation of a range of sand-hills which bear away from it towards the south-east; but its dimensions and

* Mr Taylor excavated deeply into a similar conical mound, called Um-wáweis. A high wind arising during the night, completely carried away its summit: so light were the particles when loosened.

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compactness, as well as its evident connexion with tokens of ancient remains at its base, do not confirm this supposition. Moreover, I afterwards ascertained that similar conical mounds occur in various parts of Chaldæa, invariably surrounded by, or connected with, lesser mounds undoubtedly artificial. They appear to have been citadels or temples of the same period as the adjacent ruins; but it is remarkable that they bear on their summits no trace of brickwork, and are merely cones of solid earth and sand. In two instances, I caused excavations to be made into similar but smaller conical mounds at Warka; but from top to base they exhibited no change of character; nor did they contain the slightest clue to their origin. Until such be obtained, we must remain in ignorance on the subject.

Having completed our casual survey, we regained the baggage and servants at the Arab camp, two miles distant, where our tents were already pitched among the sand-hills. Our hosts belonged to the Mádán Arabs—those of the lowest caste, who are employed by the superior Arabs in tending buffaloes and cattle, or in cultivating maize on the edges of the inundations. Ignorant and despised, they live in the most primitive state of barbarism, their only wants being those of absolute necessity. At times, when the Euphrates fails in its annual rise to overflow their lands, the destitution of the Mádán is extreme, and they are even reduced to the alternative of digging up roots to support a miserable state of poverty and hunger. Their ignorance is extreme; and I could scarcely believe that very few among them had ever seen a mule, until their genuine surprise was evident at those which carried our baggage! Súk-esh-Sheioukh and Semáva are immense cities in their estimation; Bághdád and Busrah are far beyond the limits of their peregrinations; Stambúl and the Sultán they have barely heard of.

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Like hyænas or jackals, they congregate amid the burial-places, or pitch their tents upon the ruined cities of the past, without the slightest reverence for or knowledge of the people by whom those monuments were raised. These mounds yield them utensils for their camp and frequently gold from a ransacked tomb, which is disposed of to wandering Jews for a few dates, valueless cotton fabrics, or rude ornaments for their women. Unlike the Bedouins, little reliance can be placed upon their word, and they do not scruple to plunder, both openly and secretly, from their enemies and friends without distinction. It is true, that during my subsequent stay among them nothing was positively taken from my tent; but they could not resist the desire to pilfer whenever opportunity was afforded them. Cupidity is their weak point; for a trifle they will cringe like the most abject slave, and condescend to the meanest artifices to obtain what they crave. Fickle and almost unmanageable, few persons can conceive the difficulties to be encountered in undertaking excavations among them. It was only by employing parties from several tribes, and pitting one against the other, that I succeeded in carrying on researches in the region they occupy. Jealousy and ill-will had great effect upon them. The Jebúr and other tribes employed in the excavations at Nineveh are comparatively civilized; but the Mádán of Chaldæa are little superior to the buffaloes they tend, and are regarded as destitute of feeling by the superior class of Arabs. Yet they are not altogether without good qualities. Merry and good-humoured, they contrast advantageously with the neighbouring tribes of the Amír, and the sullen Beni Lám across the Shat-el-Káhr. Their hospitality knows no bounds, and they will willingly share with the passing traveller the little stores they possess, until the whole has disappeared. In the present instance, our large party quickly demolished their stock of

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barley, and before morning all the rice of the encampment was consumed by our animals.*

The Mádán are slightly built, but well-formed, strong, and active. Their skin, exposed to all temperatures, from 25° to 150° Fahr., is tanned to a deep swarthy hue, and seldom, even in the coldest weather, covered with more than a single abba, made of goat's hair. Keffiehs or head-dresses appear to be despised; their hair, hanging in thick plaits, or more commonly in a state of nature, is so plentiful, that it alone affords sufficient protection from the summer's sun. Their eyes, wild but expressive, shine with a brightness seldom witnessed in our own humid climate; while their teeth, from eating only vegetable food, can vie in whiteness with the purest ivory. Fire-arms are almost unknown among the Mádán; but no man leaves his tent without a favourite spear or bitumen-headed club, of which he is prepared to make good use whenever opportunity arises or necessity requires. Feuds are of continual occurrence, either with their neighbours or among themselves. The period of our visit, notwithstanding the warnings of the pasha and the Turkish authorities, was peculiarly favourable; a peaceful calm prevailed after the raging storm which had just ceased with the change of governors.

Throughout this journey, the only real annoyance I experienced was from the Bashí Bázúks. Accustomed to plunder and abuse all who came in their way, they were with difficulty restrained from ill-treating their kind Arab hosts; and it was only by constant entreaties and threats that they were compelled to desist. The Arabs frequently complained to me of their conduct; and often, when I expressed a probability of my returning among them, I was greeted with the remark, "Come, Beg, we shall be glad to receive you as a brother, but do not

* See chapter xiv. for further description of the Mádán Arabs.

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bring the nízám (soldiers) with you. We will guard you better than they!" I took their advice on my return among them, and did not, in this case, regret having trusted to their word.

As an instance of the security of a stranger in an Arab camp, a scene may be related which took place at this locality. Guards had, as usual, been placed around our tents, and every person had retired to rest, when—by accident or design, whether by friend or foe it is impossible to say—a pistol was fired in the immediate neighbourhood of my tent. The whole encampment was instantly roused, and a report spread that an enemy was in the neighbourhood. The war chant of our hosts was echoed on all sides from distant encampments; the sounds, at first low and indistinct, gradually becoming louder and nearer, at length made us aware that large bodies of the Mádán were advancing to the rescue. The effect was startling and grand, as the dead silence of night was broken by an excitement of this nature. Two or three hundred men were speedily gathered round our tents, and joined in the same wild chant, grunting, yelling, and dancing without cessation. At length it was discovered that an enemy did not exist, and each party slowly retired to its own encampment, but it was long before all became once more still.

From our night's resting-place, the outline of the lofty and imposing mounds of Warka was distinctly visible. The magnitude of the ruins determined me to send on the baggage a couple of hours further to another Arab camp, so that, if requisite, we might have the opportunity of renewing acquaintance with them on the morrow.

On again emerging from the low sand-hills upon the open plain, we crossed a plot of ground, covered with a natural carpet of the richest green. The grass, incited

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by the few light showers recently fallen, was being eagerly cropped by numerous herds of graceful gazelle, which left their browsing as the party approached, and bounded off in long lines to search for a quieter retreat. The scene before us was exciting. Even the staid Bashí Bázúks were moved beyond their wont, and, packing up their long chibúks, set spurs to their horses. Uttering wild cries, they vainly attempted to overtake the frighted herds, or played at jerid among themselves for their own and others' amusement, leaving deep tracks in the soft green sward. The scene, too, was doubly enjoyable by comparison with the sterile and glaring desert at the commencement of our journey: while the sight of Warka within a few miles' distance, and the discussion naturally raised by its proximity, created a measure of excitement and delight in my companion and myself which none but ardent antiquarians on new ground can fully appreciate.

Three massive piles rose prominent before our view from an extensive and confused series of mounds, at once shewing the importance of the ruins which we—their first European visitors—now rapidly approached. The whole was surrounded by a lofty and strong line of earthen ramparts, concealing from view all but the principal objects. Beyond the walls were several conical mounds, resembling, in their general form, that of Tel Ede—one of which equalled in altitude the highest structure within the circumscribed area. Each step that we took, after crossing the walls, convinced me that Warka was a much more important place than had been hitherto supposed, and that its vast mounds, abounding in objects of the highest interest, deserved a thorough exploration. I determined, therefore, on using every effort to make researches at Warka, which, of all the ruins in Chaldæa, is alone worthy to rank with those of Babylon and Nineveh.

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All that could be effected at this visit was to make a careful map of the place, and to take such general notes as might be hereafter useful. Its most remarkable feature is the enormous accumulation of sepulchral remains of extraordinary character, which at once prove it to have been a vast necropolis, dating probably from times the most remote. As the importance of Warka requires a separate chapter to describe its wonders, I shall defer that account for the present.

On this occasion, Mr Churchill and myself spent nearly two days upon the ruins, and succeeded in obtaining several small articles and executing some drawings which indicated the great antiquity of the site. With these we once more resumed our journey, fearing lest, by a longer stay, we might be too late to rejoin the Turkish troops according to arrangement at Súk-esh-Sheioukh. It was with no little regret, therefore, that we were compelled to leave a spot so replete with interest.

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CHAPTER XII.

Bedouins—Múbárek becomes useful—Ruins of Múgeyer—Cylinders—Chedorlaomer?—Belshazzar—The Author and his Guides put to flight their Turkish Escort—Busrah—Arrival in Persia.

FROM Warka we rode nine miles in a south-south-east direction, over a desert frequently covered with marsh, to a new kál'a called Dúrájí,* on the banks of the Euphrates, near which our road passed over low rough ground, dead rushes, and old channels of the river—the evidences of former inundations. Here we encamped for the night, within sight of three remarkable piles of past greatness—Tel Ede, Warka, and Sinkara—the last of which I succeeded in visiting on subsequent occasions, and which will be described in due time.

Our course from Dúrájí followed along the left bank of the Euphrates to the marshes at the confluence of the Shat-el-Hie and Shat-el-Káhr with that river. At the parallel of Bághdád, the level of the Euphrates is so much above that of the Tigris, that the water of the former flows into the latter by a canal called the Seglawíyya. As the two rivers pursue their course southward, the Euphrates descends with more rapidity, and, at 31° north latitude, is for the first time joined by the water of the Tigris through the channel called the Shat-el-Hie, which bifurcates from the main stream at Kút-el-'Amára. The Shat-el-Hie, in conjunction with the Shat-el-Káhr, forms

* From the number of "francolin" which abound there.

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an extensive marsh, out of which a single stream finds its way to the Euphrates. Just above the point of junction a kúfah ferry is maintained, by means of which we crossed to the western side, where we suddenly found ourselves among a number of Bedouin encampments of Aneiza and Dhefyr tribes, who, for the sake of the water and vegetation of the Euphrates, usually frequent its banks at that season of the year. It was then that we experienced the benefit of Múbárek's escort. Several times strong parties of horsemen, attracted by the sight of a caravan, were in the act of swooping down upon our little party, when the wild fellow, whose eye always first detected their movements, urged his horse to full speed and rode forth to meet them. An embrace from each of the Arabs usually greeted our friend, a short conversation ensued, and they quietly retired in the direction from which they had come, while Múbárek returned in triumph to announce the success of his interview. With his aid we passed unmolested over some cultivated lands belonging to a tribe of Agayl Arabs, opposite Imám Sherífeh, whose hospitality we sought for the night within sight of the great temple of Múgeyer. At this point commences the line of date-groves which extend in uninterrupted succession along both banks of the river to its embouchure at the head of the Persian Gulf. A messenger from the sheikh of the Muntefik was here awaiting the arrival of the Turkish troops and animals, which, notwithstanding our zigzag route and detention at Warka, had not yet arrived at the rendezvous.

The unexpected delay of the Turkish escort afforded me the much-coveted opportunity of turning aside to examine the Múgeyer, of which Mr Baillie Fraser gives a short description in his volume on "Mesopotamia and Assyria."* From the Agayl camp to the ruins was a

* Page 148.

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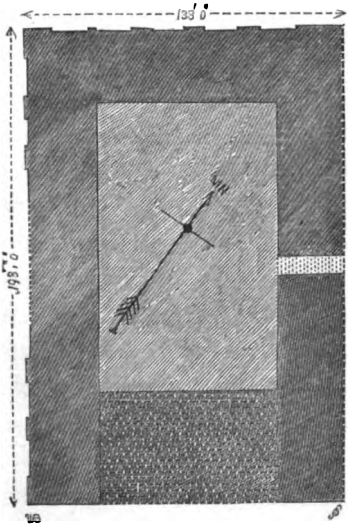
distance of nine miles, but at a point further to the south the Euphrates approaches within six miles. During the high inundations of the river, however, Múgeyer is completely surrounded by water, and is, like Warka, unapproachable on any side except in boats.

The ruins consist of a low series of mounds, of oval form, the largest diameter from north to south measuring rather more than half a mile.

The name Múgeyer is, however, peculiarly given to a remarkable building, seventy feet high, which stands near the north end of the mounds, and is the only example of a Babylonian temple remaining in good preservation, not wholly covered by rubbish. It is built of large bricks, and from their being "cemented with bitumen" originates the modern name of Múgeyer.* It consists of two distinct but massive stories, having the plan of a right-angled parallelogram, the longest sides of which are the north-east and south-west. One angle points due north, which feature, I may remark, is observable in all edifices of true Chaldæan origin. As each story rises, it gradually slopes inwards at an angle of nine degrees, for the purpose, doubtless, of bearing great superincumbent pressure, and to this fact may be attributed the remarkably perfect condition of the whole remaining edifice. The lower story is, moreover, supported by buttresses thirteen inches



Plan of the Great Temple of Múgeyer.

* Frequently, but incorrectly, called Umgheir.

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The Great Temple at Mûgeyer, from the west.

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deep, and, with the exception of those at the angles, 8 feet wide. The longest sides—the north-east and south-west—measure 198 feet each; the others only 133 feet. The number of buttresses on the south-west are nine, and on the north-west six. Those of the other sides are concealed in rubbish. Whether intentional or not, the above measurements and numbers are in the ratio of 3 : 2.

The basement or lower story is 27 feet in height, and exhibits but one entrance, 8 feet wide, on the north-east side, which leads from the base to the summit of the building. Between the stories is a gradual, stepped incline, about 7 feet in perpendicular height, which may, however, be accidental, and arise from the destruction of the upper part of the lower story.

The upper story is 14 feet in height, surmounted by about 5 feet of brick rubbish. As far as I could ascertain, the sides of this story are without supporting buttresses, measure respectively 119 by 75 feet, and recede several feet from the lower wall;* but the whole of the south-east side of the edifice is in ruins, so that it is impossible to say whether the length of the upper story exceeded 119 feet. It rather struck me, however, from the gradual incline from top to base, that a grand staircase, of the same width as the upper story, occupied this side of the structure.

Various piles of rubbish occur at different parts, and render it difficult to give detailed measurements. The Múgeyer appears to stand on a mound about 20 feet high. The exterior of the whole edifice is faced, to the thickness

* Mr Taylor remarks that "the second story is *close* up to the northern end of the first." There are, however, 30 feet between the summit edge of the first and the base of the second. Mr Taylor must intend to say that the second story is closer up to the edge of the first at its north-west end than at its south-east, the respective measurements being 30 feet and 47 feet.

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of 10 feet, with red kiln-baked bricks, but the whole mass of the interior is built of partially burnt, or sun-dried bricks. Those of the lower story are smaller than those in the upper, and are cemented with bitumen, while the latter are fixed with ordinary lime mortar. These differences arise from the fact that the two stories were not erected by the same monarch. The whole surface is pierced with oblong apertures resembling those at the Bírs Nimrúd, Akker Kúf, El-Heimar, and numerous other Chaldæan edifices.

Subsequently to this visit, at the request of Sir Henry Rawlinson, excavations were undertaken in 1854 for the British Museum at the Múgeyer by my friend Mr Taylor, her Majesty's Vice-Consul at Busrah, while I was myself engaged at Warka for the Assyrian Excavation Fund. I again took the opportunity of revisiting the site. Mr Taylor,* with astonishing patience and perseverance, penetrated through the solid mass of brick-work to the very heart and base of the edifice without discovering anything to reward his labours, or to throw light on its construction or object; until, in excavating at the south corner of the upper story, he found, at a depth of six feet below the surface, a perfect inscribed cylinder, standing on one extremity in a niche formed by the omission of one of the bricks in the layer. He afterwards sank shafts at the other corners, and secured a precisely similar record from each, all of which are now deposited in the British Museum. This discovery at Múgeyer convinced him that the commemorative cylinders of the founders were always deposited at the corners of Babylonian edifices. With this knowledge before him, Sir Henry Rawlinson, in the following autumn, at once disinterred his beautiful cylinders of Nebuchadnezzar from the corners

* See that gentleman's Memoir on the result of his excavations, in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society," vol. xv., p. 260.

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of one of the lower platforms at the Bírs Nimrúd, to the great amazement of his Arab workmen.*

From his examination of the numerous brick and cylinder inscriptions obtained at Múgeyer, Sir Henry Rawlinson regards this as one of the earliest, if not the very earliest, of the sites colonized by that Ethiopic or Scythic invasion, to which reference has already been made.† These records bear the names of a series of kings from Urukh, B.C. 2230, to Nabonidus, B.C. 540. Among others, is that of Kudur-mapula or Chedorlaomer. The temple was dedicated to *Sin* or "the moon," which element was preserved by the Greeks in the name *Mesene*, applied by them to the surrounding region; and also in that of *Camarina*, derived from the Arabic word *kamar*, "the moon," assigned by Eupolemus to either Múgeyer or Warka. The most important identification, however, is that of Múgeyer with the Biblical Ur of the Chaldees, which Sir Henry Rawlinson‡ supposes to be complete, from having read the name *Húr* upon the cylinders. In support of this proposed identification, he states that one particular parish of this place was called *Ibra*, from which he supposes Abraham to have set out on his journey to Canaan, and from whence originated the word *Hebrew*.§ This appellation is usually supposed to be derived from *Heber*, the alleged ancestor of Abraham, or from a Hebrew verb which signifies to *pass over*, in consequence of the patriarch having crossed the Euphrates. This latter, however, cannot be the correct derivation,

* See the "Athenæum," No. 1421, for Jan. 20, 1855, p. 84.

† At page 95.

‡ This great authority has elsewhere frequently expressed his belief that Warka is Ur of the Chaldees, deriving his opinion from the fact that it was known to the Talmudists and early Arabs as the birthplace of Abraham, and that it is even named Ur by the early Arab Geographers. See "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society," vol. xii., p. 481; and "Twenty-ninth Annual Report," p. 16.

§ See "Proceedings of Royal Geographical Society," vol. i., p. 47.

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because, whether Abraham previously resided at Múgeyer or Warka, it would have been unnecessary to pass over the great river, if in his time it flowed, as some suppose, considerably eastward of those places and joined the Tigris, as before stated, at Kút-el-Amára. The above proposed derivation of the word is therefore equally reasonable with one of the two usually adopted; but at the same time, it must be confessed that the ordinary acceptation of *Hebrew* as a patronymic from *Heber* is still more worthy of credit.

The cylinder inscriptions of Múgeyer are invaluable documents in confirming the authenticity and truth of Scripture. They not only inform us that Nabonidus, last king of Babylon, repaired the Great Temple of the Moon at Húr, but they also explain who Belshazzar was, concerning whom the early Bible critics have in vain endeavoured to reconcile conflicting statements. In the Book of Daniel,* he is alluded to as the king of the Chaldees when Babylon was taken by the united armies of the Medes and Persians. The account of Berosus does not, however, agree with that of Scripture. It states that Nabonidus, after being utterly routed in the open plains by Cyrus, shut himself up in the city of Borsippa, but was soon obliged to surrender his person to the conqueror.† From Daniel, therefore, we are led to conclude that Belshazzar was the last Chaldæan monarch; while Nabonidus is represented in the same capacity by Berosus. Herodotus only adds to the difficulty by calling Belshazzar and his father Labynetus—which name is certainly a corruption of Nabonidus.‡

Sir Henry Rawlinson's reading of the Múgeyer cylinders entirely reconciles these discrepances. The records

* Daniel v. 30. † In Joseph. "Contr. Apion.," i. 20.

‡ It is likewise stated in Josephus, Antiq., x. 11, 2, that Baltasar was called Naboandel by the Babylonians.

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distinctly state that *Bel-shar-ezer* (Belshazzar) *was the eldest son of Nabonidus*, and that he was admitted to a share of the government.

When Cyrus took Nabonidus, Belshazzar was regent or governor of Babylon, and, to all intents and purposes, king of the Chaldees.

Amongst other discoveries made by Mr Taylor at Múgeyer was that of a house or oratory, in a small mound covered with clay and scoria, near the eastern angle of the great temple, erected on a mound or foundation of sun-dried bricks. The ground plan of the edifice is that of a cross. The exterior was ornamented with perpendicular stepped recesses, thickly coated with bitumen. This coating may have arisen from the oozing out of that material between the bricks during the destruction of the edifice by fire, of which there were evident symptoms. Many of the outer faces of the bricks were inscribed. A thin coating of enamel or gypsum-plaster appears to have been laid over the surface, upon which the characters were stamped. These were remarkably fine; but the material was too brittle to admit of their being well preserved, and chipped off with a touch from the finger-nail—a sufficient proof of the antiquity of the edifice in which these bricks occurred, because, in like manner, they could not have been extracted from any other place without damage to the inscriptions.

This building, too, has settled the important architectural question, whether the Babylonians were acquainted with the arch. Two regularly constructed semicircular arches, running through the entire thickness of the walls, are in admirable preservation—the bricks being wedge-shaped to form the voussoirs.

Mr Taylor also ascertained that the rest of the oval space occupied by the ruins was a cemetery of the primitive ages; his account of the tombs and their contents

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forms by far the most interesting portion of his memoir on the subject.* As I shall have occasion to refer to similar objects in the account of my own researches, it is unnecessary to allude to them further in this place, except to remark that they are all referable to the Babylonian epoch.

About two hundred yards from the north-east side of the great temple, Mr Churchill discovered three large blocks of black granite projecting from the ground. On clearing the earth from around them, some parts exhibited a fine polish, but they were too much broken to admit of their original form being distinguished. They probably belonged to an altar. One bore a fragment of inscription; another had a plain upper surface, with a moulding, eight inches in depth rounded off at the angles, passing along the top of each side: two opposite surfaces bore in high relief an ornament resembling the capital letter **A** reversed, and supporting the moulding: of the other two sides, one was plain and the other broken. Like the fragments of the statue at Hammám, they probably belonged to the shrine of the deity, which stood upon the principal building.† From the summit of Múgeyer are distinctly discernible the ruins of Abú-Shehreyn, also subsequently examined by Mr Taylor.

During the time we were exploring the ruins, the Turkish escort passed us at the distance of two or three miles. Some of the most intelligent officers, seeing the huge edifice on their flank, formed a small party and galloped towards it. Having reached within a mile of Múgeyer, they were surprised to observe two or three human beings upon the summit apparently regarding the

* "Notes on the Ruins of Múgeyer," in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. v., p. 260.

† Mr Churchill's drawings, with copies of the inscriptions here discovered, were deposited in the British Museum.

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movements of the troops. Under the impression that the place was a deserted ruin, this unexpected apparition alarmed them. They halted, and watched for a few minutes. Two more figures were seen scrambling up from the opposite side, which served to confirm their fears. Riding back with all speed, they gave the alarm that a large body of Arabs were lying in ambush to attack the party. Preparations were therefore duly made for a stout resistance. The mules, servants, and baggage were placed in the centre, the troops arranged around them in square, the four guns placed at the corners so as to receive the enemy with a cross fire. Thus in a compact mass, they marched rapidly across the desert to Arjah, where we rejoined them, and then for the first time learned the commotion and alarm that we had unwittingly occasioned. It appeared that while I was engaged with Mr Churchill in taking measurements and notes on the ruins, some of our escort had climbed upon the summit, and given rise to the idea that an ambush was prepared for the Turks. It was a subject of considerable merriment for the rest of the journey, that two Englishmen, one servant, half-a-dozen Bashí Bázúks, and an Arab, had caused the retreat of a squadron of well-armed Turkish cavalry!

From Arjah, we all travelled in company to Swaij, the usual residence of the Sheikh of the Muntefik—a distance of only a few miles—where we rested for the remainder of the day, and made arrangements for crossing the desert to Busrah. Swaij is within a mile of the Arab town of Súk-esh-Sheioukh; but, as is well-known, an Arab chief infinitely prefers the freedom and security of the open country to the treachery of town walls. In accordance with this feeling, Fahád, the then Sheikh of the powerful tribe of the Muntefik, pitched his tent, and held his royal state, like his predecessors, at Swaij. His immediate

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retainers were encamped around him, and thus he lived with his flocks and herds patriarchal as Abraham himself. He behaved with princelike hospitality, supplying the whole of the caravan and troops with provisions, not only for that day, but for the three days' journey before us.

He exhibited his independence, however, by receiving the Turkish officers without rising, and scarcely deigning to speak to them—an indignity which they did not readily forget, and which, it is said, in common with other causes of complaint, shortly afterwards resulted in his being *removed* by order of the government. He also issued an order that no Turkish officer or soldier on horseback should enter the town of Súk-esh-Sheioukh upon any pretext.

It was my intention to have paid my respects to this King of the Arabs, but he unfortunately retired to his hárem sooner than usual, probably to shew his dignity, and also to rid himself of his Turkish guests, who did not fail to remind him of the suzerainty of the Porte. On sending my regrets at not having had the opportunity of waiting upon him, I received a gracious answer—a cup of hot bitter coffee—and a gracious visit from his secretary.

At Súk-esh-Sheioukh the Bashí Bázúk horsemen and our Dhefyr guides left us, carrying with them ample presents for their services. Múbárek, who on first quitting Bághdád was rather in the way than otherwise, proved eventually not only useful as a guide but as a safeguard from the Bedouins. He soon became attached to our party, and sang as merrily as his cousin Máyúf. On making him a present, I remarked that—as he had eaten the bread of the Firenghí, been saved from his enemies the Affej, and treated well during the journey—I hoped he would not forget these circumstances, but

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return good for good, by looking after the safety of any unfortunate European who might happen to fall into the clutches of his tribe. Drawing himself up to his full height, he replied :—" O Beg ! the Dhefyrís have heard in their deserts that the Englízí speaks the truth, but they have never met with such a wonder. I shall tell them, inshallah ! on my return, what I did not before credit, that the Englízí never lies—his word is as straight as my spear ! For the kindness you have shewn me, the Dhefyr will prove his gratitude when a Firenghí crosses his path ! For your sake he shall be my brother ! " The last I heard of the wild fellow was, that, with the present received, he had purchased a swift-footed delúl, and set out to rejoin his tribe on a plundering expedition.

Between Súk-esh-Sheioukh and Busrah is a distance of about seventy miles across an undulating tract of gravel and gypsum. A few wells alone supply small parties with bad brackish water, but these were totally insufficient for so many men and horses as composed our caravan ; it was, therefore, necessary to strike a more easterly course towards the marshes of the Euphrates. After suffering thirty-two hours' thirst under a hot sun, our poor animals were completely exhausted, and could with difficulty be prevented from over-filling themselves, when they reached the inundation. Three troop-horses died in the course of the night from the effect of drinking to repletion.

I need not detain my readers with an account of the remainder of the journey. We reached Zobeir in safety, crossed the great inundation which threatens shortly to overwhelm the declining city of Busrah, passed through its mouldering walls and pestilential atmosphere, and floated down its narrow inlet shrouded in groves of pomegranates, dates, and acacias to the noble Shat-el-Aráb—the combined stream of the Tigris and Euphrates.

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Fleets of merchant vessels a few years ago used to anchor in the deep channel of this magnificent river; but, owing to the neglect and ignorance of the Turkish authorities, commerce is now at a stand-still, and the only vessels, which annually enter the commodious port, are two belonging to English merchants resident at Bághdád, and occasionally a frigate of the East India Company's squadron in the Persian Gulf.

From the eastern bank of the Shat-el-Aráb, a six hours' ride across the desert brought us to the camp of the frontier commissioners, outside the extensive date-groves of Mohammerah in Persia.

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CHAPTER XIII.

Plans and Preparations for Excavating in WARKA—The Party—Arrival at Súk-esh-Sheioukh—Fahád, Sheikh of the Muntefik—Reception Tent—Falcons—The Letter and Escort.

As soon as Colonel Williams was made acquainted with the results of this journey, and had examined the relics, plans, and drawings brought from Warka, he readily listened to my suggestions that excavations should be conducted on a small scale at those ruins. To his liberality and patronage of science are due the first-fruits of Chaldæan exploration. Supplying the necessary funds for the purpose, he directed me, after a few days' rest, to return to Warka, with instructions more especially to procure specimens of the remarkable coffins of the locality, and such objects as might be easily packed for transmission to the British Museum.

I hastened to Busrah, purchased implements, and laid in a little store of trifling articles—such as keffíehs, dresses, tobacco, pipes, needles, dates, &c., which I might give to the Arabs as presents, or barter for small antiquities in their possession.

On setting out from Busrah, my party consisted of nine. First, my servant Ovannes, a shrewd Armenian Christian, who spoke seven of the native languages with fluency, and who served me faithfully during the continuance of the frontier commission; he had previously been in the service of Colonel Rawlinson, and spent the greatest part of his life with Englishmen; he was

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one of the most thoughtful, useful fellows I met with during nearly six years' experience in the East. There were, besides, a cáwas, a groom, a tent-pitcher who also acted as cook, three muleteers, and two guides, with fifteen horses and mules. The dislike exhibited by the Arabs to the Turkish troops told me that I should be safer and more welcome alone. I therefore declined to apply for letters from the Pasha of Busrah, and set out without so much as either asking or requiring his aid or protection.

After a tedious and uninteresting journey of little more than three days, without adventure worth recording, we once more arrived at Súk-esh-Sheioukh. The cáwas was sent forward with a message to the Sheikh of the Muntefik at Swaij, that one of the English officers, who had passed through a few days previously with the Turkish troops, desired an interview with him. On my arrival, I learned that Fahád was in his hárem, and about to perform his devotions, it being just mid-day; but he sent me a polite invitation into his reception-tent, which stood upon the open desert, accessible to the whole tribe. It was a large white canvas tent supported on two poles, with a lining of pink calico and double roof, the lower of which served as a kind of canopy, and was edged with what had been gold fringe, but which had now assumed every colour of the rainbow. This tent was a recent present from the new pasha, when friendship was re-established between the noble house of Muntefik and the government of Bághdád on the accession of Abdí Pasha to power. The sides of the tent were spread with narrow carpets, and, at the upper end, the seat of honour was indicated by a large cushion of striped silk backed with two pillows of blue plush. Upon these I took up my position, and endeavoured to amuse myself until the sheikh had concluded his prayers.

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An ugly black slave seems usually chosen to perform the office of káwájí to a great sheikh, as though his colour were peculiarly fitted for presiding over cinders and cooking utensils. This worthy soon made his appearance, and forthwith proceeded with his important functions, surrounded by his family of coffeepots close outside the tent. Attracted by the sight of these preliminaries, and knowing from them that some guest had arrived to the tribe, the elders and warriors began to collect, sit down in the tent, and stare with untired gaze at the strangely accoutred traveller. After an interval of half-an-hour the sheikh was announced, and all rose to receive him while yet distant some hundred paces from the tent. Two or three of the assembly tried by repeated gestures to induce me to follow their example, but, as dignity would have been compromised by a too hasty show of obedience, I retained my seat, to their utmost consternation, until Fahád was close at hand. Although his hárem was not 500 yards from the reception-tent, he rode a magnificent black mare, hung round with red tassels and Arab paraphernalia, and was attended by about fifty of his immediate followers. In approaching, he saluted the crowd, and was received by each man present with his hand on his heart, but a proud inclination of his body, as much as to imply, "We reverence you as the head of our tribe; but you are, nevertheless, only a man like ourselves." While he dismounted and advanced towards me, an opportunity was afforded of observing his appearance.

Sheikh Fahád (the tiger) was a tall, stout, handsome man, forty-five or fifty years of age, with regular features, and the slightly aquiline nose so peculiar to the high-class Arab. His forehead was lofty and expansive, full of thought and energy. The expressive black eyes, as they glanced from one to another of the party, beamed with

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kindness and good humour; but it was not difficult to conceive them assuming a very different aspect on other occasions. Conscious of his importance, high birth, and dignity, he bestowed his sálaams with the grace and pride of a monarch saluting his abject slaves, rather than as the head of a little republic where fraternity, liberty, and equality prevailed. Yet the Muntefik were proud of their sheikh. He was just such a man as a powerful and warlike race desire for their chief. He was brave in battle, sage in council, hospitable and generous; but unbearable in his demeanour towards the Turks, whom he treated with the utmost contempt and disdain. Although he had recently sworn fealty to the pasha at Bághdád in humbled pride, he now assumed the state and dignity of an independent prince in his native wilds. It was the true Arab feeling which induced him to treat the Turkish officers with such rudeness on their late visit, mingled probably with a desire to gain more effectually the hearts of his tribe—to the sheikhship of which he had but recently succeeded by the death of his brother Bender. He wore the usual striped keffíeh, and black abba embroidered on one shoulder with gold.

He bade me welcome with the greatest affability as we seated ourselves on the silken láháf. A sálaam to the assembly was the signal for all to be seated. Coffee and pipes were duly handed to the principal parties, and the conference then commenced. My object in visiting him was to secure his protection while in his territories. Knowing that Arabs care nothing for the antiquities of their deserts, provided they are not golden treasures, I concluded that it was best to be frank and open with him.

He was evidently in good humour—a white day on his calendar—so, in oriental style, I endeavoured to gain his good opinion with a few pointed compliments. I thanked him for his attention and hospitality on my former visit,

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and regretted not having had the opportunity of personally expressing my obligations on that occasion; adding, that a favour shewn to me was, in fact, an exhibition of friendship and esteem towards the Sultán of my country. This little speech had the desired effect. He was thenceforward, in Eastern phrase, "my friend, my servant, my —anything I pleased! What could he do for me?" On expressing my desire to visit Warka, and that he would send some of his people to accompany and protect me, he instantly replied:—"I am your slave. Some Arabs are dogs, but the tribes of the Muntefik are my servants. You and your property are as safe with them, as in the shelter of my own tent." He immediately called two of his nobles by name, who stepped forward, made their sálaams, and received his orders to bring their mares to the tent. During their absence, the following conversation ensued:—"Do many Europeans pass through Súk-esh-Sheioukh?"—"No! what should induce them to come so far from their own homes in Firengistán?"—"The Arab loves the shade of his own tent, and the Firenghí is equally attached to the land of his birth, but the latter travels into far distant countries, to see the world, gain instruction, and impart it to his friends on his return. Some travel on business—others for pleasure. Many, like myself, are partial to visiting old ruins, like Bábel, Niffar, and Warka. The Arabs think us mad for our pains!"—"Perhaps so. What is the use of your seeing them?"—"They afford us many relics—such as writing on bricks—which throw light on the past not otherwise obtainable. From them we learn that *our* forefathers were *yours* also!" He seemed to doubt this fact, for how could a Ghyáwr be related to a good Mussulman! At this stage of the conversation, one of the bystanders stepped forward, and said that I had already been to Warka, and got some small antiques from the Mádán, "for which,

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máshallah! the Firenghí paid *nine keráns*, when they were not worth a *pice*. By Allah! what I say is true!" Fahád appeared pleased that I had spent money among his people; but his informant, after true Arab fashion, had magnified the amount ninefold! The sheikh, however, understood the object of this information, and said, laughingly :—" You had better go with the Beg, and see if you can't find something worthy of his acceptance, for which he will pay you at the same rate."

The secretary was sent for, and ordered to write a letter to Sheikh Debbí, at Dúrájí, instructing him to receive me safely across the Euphrates, and to attend me to Warka, Sinkara (which place had not been mentioned), and any ruin I desired to visit within the limits of his jurisdiction. When I might be pleased to return, he was to see me again safely conveyed across the Euphrates.

During all this time the Arabs continued to arrive, until there were about two hundred within the tent. Each man on entering advanced into the centre, made his sálaam to the sheikh, and then retired to take his place, either among the free Arabs who sat on the narrow carpets, or among the servants and slaves who stood behind. A large semicircular space was thus left in front of the chief. It was highly amusing to watch the free Arab, marching straight to a spot where it appeared impossible for him to wedge himself into the crowded row. The occupants, however, invariably arose, and in an instant the wedge was inserted and seen squatting upon the carpet. The decorum of the whole assembly, and the implicit obedience and respect paid to the chief, struck me particularly. If such were not mere outward shew, and faith were really to be placed in his followers, the Sheikh of the Muntefik is no mean personage, and is not to be despised by the Turkish or any other government. Better to have him a friend than a foe. It is

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asserted that in a few hours he is able to raise a body of 50,000 well-armed men.

Fahád was an ardent sportsman, and kept his leash of falcons. As a portion of his state, the beautiful birds were placed in the centre of the area; while the falconer, in his crimson dress and plaited locks, shewed off the docility and grace of his pet birds, amid the frequent plaudits of the sheikh and the assembled Muntefíjís.

At length the secretary finished the letter, and the seal of the sheikh was duly affixed thereto. The two guides, having brought their black mares to the tent, were then called in, and received the letter in charge with the injunction :—"You see this Beg sitting by my side; attend him wherever he pleases to go, let him do what he wishes at Warka and Sinkara, and take care to bring him back in safety to this tent." Then turning to me he said :—"All that you required is done." Taking this as a hint, I returned thanks, paid my sálaam, and departed—the sheikh rising as much as, in his opinion, a strict Mussulman consistently could do towards a Christian. I left the tent much pleased with my reception and the result of the interview.

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CHAPTER XIV.

Winter—Camel-foals—Tuweyba Tribe—Old Friends—Harassing Labours—Dissatisfaction—Budda, the Grave-digger and Gold-finder—Arab Kindness—Warka in 1854—Difficulties—Scarcity of Food and Water—Patriarchal Life in Abraham's Country—Misery and Rapacity—Sand-storms.

It was now winter in the Arab plains, and the thermometer stood below freezing-point as we advanced northward from the sheikh's encampment. On quitting the date-groves, clouds concealed the sun, and the wind blew so keen and cuttingly across the level desert, that it was necessary frequently to dismount and walk, that the blood might be kept in proper circulation. Although I had crossed the snows of the Alps and the Taurus, I never before experienced such an intensity of cold. I was almost paralyzed, not from the lowness of the temperature, but from the passage of the wind over the soil impregnated with saltpetre; we were as if in a spacious refrigerator. The Arabs, with their bare feet resting in large iron stirrups, were completely benumbed and useless, frequently falling from their faithful mares, and requiring to be again lifted into their saddles. Wherever we passed an encampment, a wretched camels'-dung fire imparted a degree of warmth to the half-clad Arabs, which only caused them to feel the cold more acutely. They sat shivering and grinning, their faces alone visible from beneath their rags, and bearing more resemblance to monkeys than living human beings. All

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had dreadful coughs, and their constant barking jarred horribly on the ear. It is almost incredible that the Arab of the Tigris and Euphrates can endure such extremes of temperature as there prevail—at one season scorched under a burning sun, at another almost frozen to death. The same coarse abba which shades him from the heat in summer is his only protection against the cold of winter! We again crossed the Euphrates.

The Sheikh of the Muntefik was at this time about taking stock, and the banks of the river were covered with immense flocks of camels, sheep, and cattle. Many were the inquiries made whether the bridge of boats was yet built which was to convey them across the great stream to Swaij. It was the foaling season, and the camel-herds were actively engaged in protecting the young. Numbers recently foaled, and unable yet to walk, were being carefully carried in arms to the tents for protection from the killing wind.

On the second day from Swaij, I alighted at the reed muthíf of Sheikh Debbí, at Dúrájí, whom I had seen on my previous visit. The Mádán tribes above Súk were governed by a deputy of Fahád's. For many years this honour—and profit—were enjoyed alternately by two brothers, Sá'dún and Debbí. The former was then in power, and Debbí was his lieutenant. In authority the latter was a great tyrant, and delighted in inflicting severe punishments for small crimes. Many poor wretches were shewn me as instances of his cruelty—one had lost his hand, another his foot, and a third was hamstrung and appeared on crutches dragging behind him the useless limb!

Debbí received the great sheikh's letter with becoming respect, and did the honours of hospitality right nobly. A few minutes sufficed to prepare a bountiful meal, of which I was not sorry to partake, for the cold and wind

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had given me a ravenous appetite. A dirty reed basket was speedily laid on the ground, containing freshly-baked flaps of bread, and the grilled shoulders of a young lamb, accompanied with a bowl of lebban, or soured milk. In true Arab style, I set to with fingers and teeth—the native knife and fork—and enjoyed a delicious meal. My two Arab guards and Debbí himself seemed to do the same, for, between us, the eatable contents of the basket effectually disappeared. The bones, however, were destined to undergo another polishing, for, on removal from the banqueting-hall, I saw them between the teeth of two or three Arabs seated near the entrance, while an expectant crowd stood round awaiting their turn.

The nearest Arab encampment to the ruins of Warka, was that belonging to the Tuweyba tribe of the Beni Hácheym,* situated on the right bank of the Euphrates, at the distance of six miles. To this, therefore, it was arranged that I should proceed, and pitch my tent during my temporary stay. Debbí, in conformity with the orders of his liege lord, mounted his mare and accompanied me. We travelled north-westward about ten miles, among a succession of ravines cut by the river during its seasons of flood, and ultimately arrived at our destination.

I was soon recognised by the Arabs, who proved to be those I had previously made acquaintance with upon the ruins, and from whom I had purchased several antiques. Their bright eyes and smiles satisfied me that I was regarded as a welcome guest. The sheikh, Azayiz-es-Sálem, was ill in bed, but his son-in-law, Hennayin, came out to greet me, and held the bridle of my horse while I

* The names of the Beni Hácheym tribes are—

1. Thúálem	4. El-Ezowyer	7. Músh'ála
2. El-bú-Hassán	5. El-'Abbás	8. Jú'áber
3. Ez-Zayád	6. El-Hadjíl	9. Tuweyba.

The last-named tribe possesses about 100 tents, or 500 souls. Concerning the other tribes, I could obtain no positive information.

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dismounted. One of Fahád's men, as a superior being, addressed him and the crowd, which unceremoniously seated itself in a circle around the new comers :—"Dogs! this Beg is an officer of the Sultán's ; if any harm happens to him, or if the least article belonging to him is stolen, you and your wives shall be taken with your hands bound to Sheikh Fahád, and you will not soon forget the punishment you will receive." All bowed their heads, in implicit obedience to the great power, with exclamations of "Wallah!" Hearing the guides giving imperious orders, I feared the Arabs might imagine they were to supply everything in Oriental style—gratis, and therefore called the sheikh's representative aside, to tell him that it was my wish to pay for all articles, at a reasonable price, and even a little above actual value. If, however, he attempted to be exorbitant in his demands, I threatened to leave the settlement of his account to the Sheikh of the Muntefik. Hennayin seemed to be delighted, but in a short time, Arab-like, asked six shámies (9s.) a-day for each workman, the ordinary wage being a twelfth part of that sum—to which he at length decreased his demand.

On the following morning I started with a party of excavators for the ruins, and continued my labours for three weeks. My work was harassing in the extreme. At sunrise I set out with the Arabs for the mounds, a distance of six miles, and never left them during the whole day. The soil was so light that, in walking from trench to trench, my feet were buried at each step. The Arabs required constant direction and watching. It was usually long after sunset ere we returned to camp, stumbling every instant over the broken ground. A few minutes sufficed for me to swallow the food my cook had prepared, when, almost tired to death, I was obliged to lay down plans from my rough notes, write my journal,

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and pack the objects procured in the course of the day. On many occasions, it was two o'clock in the morning before I retired to rest, perfectly benumbed from the intensity of the cold, which even the double walls of my little tent could not exclude.

Debbí on the second day begged permission to return to Dúrájí, pretending that he had received a pressing message from his brother Sá'dún. He left behind him a servant to look after my safety, kissed the hands of Fahád's people, and prayed them, by all that was holy and sacred, to take the greatest care of my precious person and goods, "for," said he, "should anything happen to him, woe betide me!" Two days later, the Muntefik guides themselves also asked permission to return home, because Fahád and all his people were about to set out in a few days for the pastures beyond Múgeyer with all their flocks and herds, and they naturally desired to accompany them. I was not sorry to lose these gentry, for they evidently rough-rode the poor Tuweyba tribe, treating them like "dogs" as they had styled them.

No sooner, however, were my protectors gone than my troubles began. The fickle character of the Mádán required fresh excitement; many of them were soon tired of their new employment; they desired another scene. A portion of the tribe had already departed to commence their cultivation on the flooded banks of the Shat-el-Káhr, which had now for the first time overflowed for several years; the rest were all anxiety to follow. Daily they became more importunate, but were still detained by the sheikh's son-in-law, Hennayin, whom I had gained over to second all my plans, it being no part of my intention to quit Warka until the objects of my journey were secured. Hennayin, at my instigation, sounded the feelings of the Arabs, and found that more than half their number was willing to remain and work. The remainder,

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headed by the sheikh's brother, insisted on going and taking all the tribe with him, although the poor sheikh himself was too ill to bear the fatigue of a journey, and wished to remain.

At length the dissatisfied portion of the community contented themselves by decamping during the night—not, however, before they had set fire to the brushwood at the back of my tent with an evident desire to burn it down. Each following day shewed a decrease in the size of our little encampment, until at length Sheikh Azayiz sent me word to say, that he would no longer be responsible for my safety, as his tribe was at feud with all around, and nothing would delight his enemies more than to pounce upon him in his present undefended state. He suggested that we should all decamp to Dúrájí, promising to remain with the workmen who adhered to my party. This arrangement was carried out, and, during the remainder of my stay, my tent was pitched under the walls of Sheikh Debbí's kála'a, nine miles from the ruins.

Of the Arabs who remained with me there were some who had passed their lives in ransacking the ruins for gold, and who consequently were acquainted with every hole and corner of the place. Among these was an old fellow, named Budda, whose locks had grown gray during his avocation as a "grave-digger." Shrewd, active, and energetic, the head of every piece of fun or mischief, whether in leading a chorus or in attacking the enemy, old Budda was regarded as the father of his tribe, and had much more positive influence over his fellows than either Azayiz or Hennayin. Whenever a quarrel took place, Budda was appealed to as judge: whenever an opinion was required, Budda was the counsel employed: in fact, Budda was the genius of the Tuweyba tribe, and at his death will doubtless be dubbed an Imám! He soon became as necessary to me as he was to his own people;

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and all works requiring particular care were confided to Budda's direction. He delighted when the day's labour was over to steal softly into my tent, sip a cup of coffee, and recount his wild adventures. His little gray eyes sparkled, and his wrinkled smiling face beamed with delight, when he was informed that he was appointed sheikh of the workmen. His favourite position was to sit on his heels and place upon his knees his bony hands, which, from continual grubbing in the earth, had grown long and sharp like those of a mole. His dress was a respectable white abba, which he wore round his waist, his head being wrapped in an ample keffieh, almost the only one in the tribe.

Budda.

Next in intelligence was his son Gunza with the squeaky voice, a miserable, lanky fellow, having sharp hatchet features, and long jet-black locks, well greased and plaited by his newly-married wife. He too was a general favourite; and, next to his father's, the falsetto voice of Gunza was heard above all others in their wild yells and songs. He was a good workman, extremely docile, affectionate and obliging. His skin was as brown as his abba, which I never saw on his shoulders; keffieh he scorned to wear. His father had brought him up to be a professed coffin-

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breaker, and it was incredible with what cunning and cleverness he set about his work. He was a perfect ferret, and might frequently be seen burrowing in a hole into which it seemed almost impossible that he could have crept.

Then came his cousin Suweyd, a tall handsome fellow, who delighted in a short spear and a thick head of hair, which, being seldom combed, hung about his ears and neck *ad libitum*. Suweyd was fond of cringing, and was frequently ill-tempered, but he was strong, and esteemed a good warrior as well as an active workman.

With these three and Hennayin, who was deputed to use the influence and power of his father-in-law Sheikh Azayiz, and who rendered me valuable assistance, I contrived to guide the unwieldy spirits of the Tuweyba. Notwithstanding their wild looks and bad character, they exhibited many good traits. They could not understand my having any other object but that of searching for gold like themselves, and were disappointed at my not having found any. Soon after commencing excavations, Gunza one morning came to me with the following offer:—"Beg! you have now been with us several days, and spent much money to no purpose: let us choose a place where to dig, and, inshallah! we shall soon find heaps of gold!" It is needless to say that these heaps existed only in his good-natured imagination.

In returning from the ruins at night I always made it a practice to ride along with the Arabs and enter into the spirit of their amusements. This, I believe, told strongly in my favour. Often, when a francolin sprang up before the party, and a well-aimed shot with a bitumen-headed club or stick brought down the game, the lucky sportsman would throw it on the ground before my horse and beg my acceptance of it. Occasionally one of my wild friends would rush into my tent, holding out a hen's egg:—"We receive presents from you, Beg, daily, but

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have nothing to give in return worthy of your acceptance. What else but food have we to offer? All I possess is a hen! See, she has just laid an egg; pray, Beg, accept it." Similar instances of a kind disposition evinced themselves; and I passed a pleasant time on the whole with this rude and primitive tribe.

During the month spent at the camps of Azayiz and Debbí, my first collection of antiquities was sent from Warka to the British Museum, but my principal discoveries were effected during a subsequent visit, when, accompanied by Mr Boutcher the artist, I passed the three first months of the year 1854 at the same locality, in charge of the expedition sent out under the auspices of the Assyrian Excavation Fund. Few explorers can have more difficulties to experience than I had on that occasion. After having passed, with numerous adventures and mishaps from Niffar, through the intricate marshes of the Affej, the unknown swamps under the independent sway of the Amír, and a three-days' waterless desert, I found that a little revolution had taken place around Warka during my absence. The Tuweyba tribe had been driven out of Mesopotamia across the Euphrates, Sheikh Debbí had fled with his people from Kála'a Dúrájí, and there were no Arabs nearer the ruins than at the little village of El-Khithr on the Euphrates, nine miles distant, consequently too far off to admit of my carrying on effective operations for any length of time. To this place I was, however, driven, in order to make my preparations and collect a staff of workmen. The sheikh at El-Khithr proved to be an ignorant cross-grained fellow, evincing no desire to aid me, and exorbitant in all his demands. It is true that he permitted some of his tribe to work in the ruins for a few days at high wages: but there was no dependence to be placed in him, and he at last absolutely refused to supply me with workmen.

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Hearing that my Tuweyba friends were encamped about a day's journey off, I despatched a messenger to Azayiz, who speedily made his appearance in company with old Budda. Loving were the greetings that passed between us, and many were the hugs which Azayiz bestowed on me. Budda, however, as an inferior, contented himself with imprinting two respectful kisses on my left shoulder. Azayiz was willing to place his tribe at my disposal: but it was in fearfully bad odour with all around, more especially with the Wádí, into whose hands the Warka territory had now passed. On my promise to give him a written guarantee for his security, he brought over about thirty men, and pitched his tent near mine. This number not being, however, sufficient for my purpose, more were sent for. I likewise accepted an offer of labourers from Támar, Sheikh of El-'Abbás tribe, which was stationed near the junction of the Semáva and Hillah streams of the Euphrates. Finding that my force was increasing, the El-Khithr tribe rebelled against the authority of their sheikh, and voluntarily offered their services: I selected as many men as were required, and at once decided on a change of quarters.

While these arrangements were in progress, a few Arabs were employed in digging wells midway between El-Khithr and the ruins, in the dry deep channel of an old offshoot from the Euphrates. The experiment succeeded, and a supply of brackish water was obtained, sufficing for a time to satisfy our wants. The camp was then removed from the bank of the great river into the desert beside these wells, which was the nearest position to the ruins affording water. Azayiz brought his tent, but the workmen contented themselves with rude shelters of camel's thorn, fetched from the side of the Euphrates, and interposed between themselves and the wind, which at times blew most bitterly cold. Fuel was procured by

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digging up decayed roots of tamarisk, which were here and there to be found under the sandy soil. This served to keep in their bodies some sparks of warmth, as they sat shivering over their watch-fires at night. The water, however, at length became undrinkable—even the Arabs refused to touch it. It was, therefore, necessary to purchase camels, by means of which valuable animals sweet water from the Euphrates was daily conveyed, not only to the camp, but also to the working parties at the mounds.

Nothing could exceed the primitive mode of life which we led in this region of Abraham's birthplace. In the patriarchal style, we were surrounded by our people—our flocks and herds, asses and camels, were daily driven to browse by the river side in the morning, and back to the camp at night. A few of the Arabs brought their wives with them, who baked flat loaves of barley bread in their native ovens for the wants of the community. Little enough, it is true, had the poor Arabs: and we were frequently obliged to provide for them out of our scanty store when their own was exhausted. The extreme scarcity of food was, perhaps, our greatest difficulty. In consequence of the river having failed to overflow its natural banks for the four years since my former visit, the small plots of cultivation which formed the chief support of the Mádán tribes had utterly failed, and reduced them to a state of the most abject destitution. They had little or nothing to support life beyond the roots dug out of the ground, or the plunder obtainable from neighbouring tribes. A dearth of provisions everywhere prevailed along the banks of the Lower Euphrates, so that barley had risen fourfold beyond its usual price. On first commencing operations, the offal thrown out from our cook's tent was greedily seized and devoured by the poor, half-starved wretches, who, how-

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ever, fared better as the excavations progressed, and they received the reward of their daily labours. Hunger makes all men selfish, and in most cases alters all the better feelings of our nature. The Tuweyba tribe, which were previously in comparatively affluent circumstances, and had engaged my sympathies on account of their good-natured hospitality, were now become perfect demons of avarice and rapacity. They insisted on being paid their wages every night, so that, as there was much difficulty in obtaining coin, I was frequently obliged to reduce my customary number of hands until a fresh supply reached me. There was not sufficient small change to pay each man separately, so that a deputy was chosen for parties of four or five, and the wages were handed over to him in their presence. Then began a violent discussion about the due partition of the spoil. Each man tried to cheat the other, and argued his own case, at the full pitch of his voice, in rich, round Arab gutturals. The furious gesticulations that accompanied the dispute seemed frequently to threaten an open breach of the peace, but only ended in talk and abuse. They would sit for hours over their watch-fires, discussing the knotty question implicated in a black *pice:* and often, when it appeared to be settled, and the angry voices had subsided to their natural tone, the smothered flame would break out afresh with more impetuosity than before. Half the night was frequently spent in such debates, which invariably ended in some poor fellow being defrauded by his friend. The scenes which these quarrels gave rise to, under the light of the pale moon and the red glare of the tamarisk fire, were such as would have formed a fine subject for the painter. Each man was the guardian of his own wealth, and dared not trust his little skin of flour to the care of his neighbour: whether in camp or on the ruins, every one carried his supply tied up in his abba, which, when

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measured out to be made into bread by the women, never passed out of its owner's vision!*

The great difficulty was, as I have said, how to buy provisions, for, on account of the scarcity, not a single article could be obtained in the neighbourhood for love or money. It was therefore necessary to send for all our supplies to Súk-esh-Sheioukh, a distance of sixty miles; and, as the desert did not furnish a blade of grass, our animals, too, were obliged to be provided with barley and straw from the same place.

In ordinary seasons, the inundation of the Euphrates extends to the very base of the mounds, and renders approach impossible from the east except by boat. It is upon the newly-deposited soil left by the retiring waters, that the Arabs cultivate crops of maize for their next year's subsistence; it may therefore be well conceived that their condition was not enviable when their husbandry failed for several successive years, and they had no other means of support.

Another difficulty considerably impeded excavations. It was my desire to have encamped amid the mounds themselves; but this was impossible, in consequence of the frequency of sand-storms induced by the slightest breath of air. While all around was in comparative stillness, Warka was enveloped in a dense cloud of impalpable sand, which occurred at least twice or thrice a-week, and rendered our situation at times extremely disagreeable. The workmen were driven from the trenches, and these were drifted up in the course of a few hours. So densely was the air impregnated with the flying atoms, that the Arabs themselves often lost their way in returning to camp. Yet, beyond a certain distance from the ruins, scarcely a breath of wind was perceptible, and the atmosphere remained clear and tranquil.

* For a farther account of the character of the Mádán, see page 122.

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CHAPTER XV.

"The Land of Shinar"—Warka, the Ancient "Erech"—"Ur of the Chaldees"—Scene of Desolation and Solitude—Enormous Extent of Ruins—The Búwáríyya—Reed-mat Structure.

Of the primeval cities founded by Nimrod, the son of Cush, four are represented, in Genesis x. 10, as giving origin to the rest:—"And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar."

The position of this land of Shinar is a much disputed point, and grave discussion has arisen concerning its identification. Some writers, from similarity of name, contend that it refers to the modern district called Sinjar, in Mesopotamia, between Mosul on the Tigris, and Bír on the Euphrates; but the coincidence goes no further, for Shinar is described in the Bible as "a plain," whereas Sinjar is an undulating, rocky region, traversed by a range of lofty limestone mountains. Under these circumstances, the supposed identity fails, and we are compelled to look elsewhere for the first settlements.

Others, with more reason, point to a district much further to the south, where are the remains of innumerable ancient cities, regarded by Jewish tradition as the country Shinar, from whence that nation originally proceeded. In confirmation of this, Babylonia, in the old cuneiform inscriptions, is called by the same name,—

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Shinar, and it is likewise still preserved in the important ruins of Sinkara.

The site of Babel is, moreover, traditionally assigned to the same region, and the large ruins near Hillah on the Euphrates are generally supposed to represent it. If this be admitted, we ought naturally to seek for the other three cities of the primitive kingdom in the adjacent region. Without, however, attempting to identify Accad or Calneh, which would be foreign to our purpose, let us see if there be any site which will correspond with the biblical Erech—the second city of Nimrod.

About 120 miles south-east of Babylon, are some enormous piles of mounds, which, from their name and importance, appear at once to justify their claim to consideration. The name of Warka is derivable from Erech without unnecessary contortion. The original Hebrew word "Erk," or "Ark," is transformed into "Warka," either by changing the *aleph* into *vau*, or by simply prefixing the *vau* for the sake of euphony, as is customary in the conversion of Hebrew names to Arabic. If any dependence can be placed upon the derivation of modern from ancient names, this is more worthy of credence than most others of like nature.

Some persons derive Warka from the Arabic root *'irk*, "a branch or vein," from whence originates the modern name of the region—Irák-Arábí; but it must be remembered that the Arabic language is not to be depended on for the root of such an ancient name as Erech. "Country of arteries" would otherwise be a very appropriate name for a region intersected with canals.

Sir Henry Rawlinson states his belief that Warka is Erech, and in this he is supported by concurrent testimony. Although he has been unable to read its cuneiform name with precision, it is generally designated as "the city," *par excellence*. He therefore ascribes to Warka a very high

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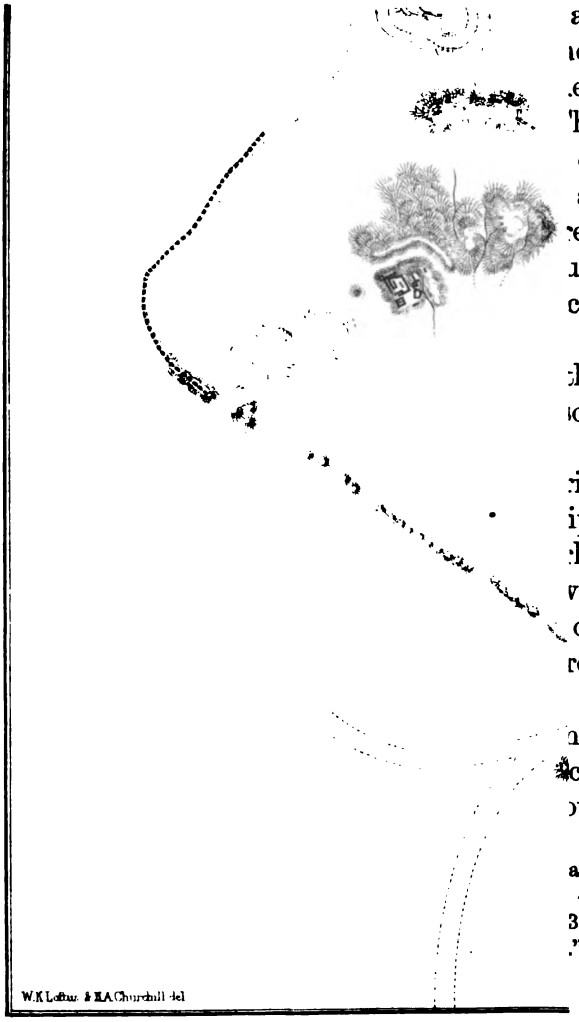

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antiquity, and regards it as the mother-city from which all others sprang.* It is not improbable that Herodotus refers to Warka when he speaks of Arderikka,† corresponding with the Chaldæan *Ar'a de Erek*, or Land of Erech.

A trace of the same name appears to exist in Orchoë of Alexander's time. We are told by Pliny‡ that the inhabitants of that city diverted the waters of the Euphrates for the purpose of irrigating their lands; and it is likewise mentioned by Strabo§ as a city which possessed an university for the study of astronomy, from whence originated the sect of Chaldæan philosophers called Orchoëni, in contradistinction to those of Borsippa. The near correspondence of the two names, the discovery of very early cuneiform, as well as of Greek, records at Warka, the immensity of its ruins, and the sacred character attached to them, are certainly highly favourable to the identity of Warka with the primitive Erech, and the Greek Orchoë.

It has been elsewhere observed,‖ that previous to the discovery of the Mûgeyer cylinders, Sir Henry Rawlinson definitely concluded that Warka was, moreover, Ur of the Chaldees, from whence Abraham migrated into Syria. He remarks that a very ancient and valuable manuscript in his library determinately connects the ruins of Warka with Ur:—"The traditionists report that Abraham was born at El Warka, in the district of Edh-Dhawábí,¶ on the confines of Kaskar, and that his father afterwards moved to Nimrod's capital, which is in the territory of Kûtha. As-sûdí, however, states that when the mother of Abraham found herself pregnant, Azer (the biblical Terah) feared lest the child should perish, so he went out

* See page xvi. of the Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1852; and Proceedings of the Royal Geogr. Society, vol. i., page 47.

† Herodotus, i. 185. ‡ Pliny, vi. 27. § Strabo, xvi. 739.

‖ At page 131. ¶ Dowáb, in Persian, means "two rivers."

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with her to a country between Kúfa and Wasit, which was called Ur."* This tradition of Abraham's birth-place at Warka, however, originated not with the Arabs, but with the Jews, and is therefore more deserving credence.

Without desiring to claim for Warka more honour than the place is duly entitled to, may we not, although admitting the correctness of the reading "Hur" on the Múgeyer cylinders, still, consistently with this ancient tradition, regard Warka as Ur, on the supposition that this name is applied—not to a city—but to a district of the Chaldees, which included both the ruined sites of Warka and Múgeyer? In this light "Ur of the Chaldees" is, I believe, regarded by some authorities on this subject.

If Múgeyer be Ur, we have likewise the same root in the name Orchoë. I therefore agree with Mr Baillie Fraser,† in his remark that "Warka may possibly represent Orchoë of the Chaldæans, while the term Orchoë may be nothing more than a mere modification of the ancient Erech, and Warka or Irka a more modern pronunciation of both."

Having made these preliminary remarks on the still obscure origin and history of Warka, I proceed to describe the present aspect of these very remarkable ruins. They stand in latitude about 31° 19′ N. and in longitude about 45° 40′ E., and are distant four miles from the nearest point on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. An elevated tract of desert soil, ten miles in breadth, is slightly raised above a series of inundations and marshes caused by the annual overflowing of the Euphrates. Upon this

* "Journal of Royal Asiatic Society," vol. xii., p. 481; note.

† "Mesopotamia and Assyria," p. 115. In several recent works, the names Múgayah, El-Asayíeh, or "the place of pebbles," and Senkereh are, on the authority of Colonel Chesney, applied to the ruins of Warka. The Arabs of the locality, however, do not know them by any such names; and Sinkara is an independent ruin, 15 miles east-south-east of Warka.

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are situated not only Warka, but Sinkara, Tel Ede, and Hammam—all unapproachable, except from November to March, during which months the river assumes its lowest level, and occasionally admits of access. This belt of elevated soil extends from a few miles south of Warka, in a N.E. direction, to the meres of the Affej already mentioned. Towards the south and east the land of Chaldæa is swallowed up in a chain of marshes, through which, at long intervals, an island or an ancient mound appears above the horizon of waters. This character of the district appears from historical evidence to have obtained from the earliest times, and is duly represented in the Nineveh sculptures during the period of Sennacherib. While the inundation prevails, reeds and coarse grass skirt the border of the water, and a few stunted tamarisk bushes flourish for a time at a little higher level; but with the retiring of the water vegetation rapidly dies, and in a few short weeks nothing but dried rushes and leafless twigs are to be seen on a parched sandy desert.

The desolation and solitude of Warka are even more striking than the scene which is presented at Babylon itself. There is no life for miles around. No river glides in grandeur at the base of its mounds; no green date groves flourish near its ruins. The jackal and the hyæna appear to shun the dull aspect of its tombs. The king of birds never hovers over the deserted waste. A blade of grass or an insect finds no existence there. The shrivelled lichen alone, clinging to the weathered surface of the broken brick, seems to glory in its universal dominion upon those barren walls. Of all the desolate pictures which I have ever beheld, that of Warka incomparably surpasses all. There are, it is true, lofty and imposing structures towering from the surrounding piles of earth, sand, and broken pottery, but all form or plan is lost in masses of fallen brickwork and rubbish. These

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only serve to impress the mind more fully with the complete ruin and desertion which have overtaken the city. Its ancient name even is lost to the modern tribes, and little is known with certainty of its past history. Nineveh, Babylon, and Susa have their peculiar traditions, but ancient Warka and its sanctity are forgotten as though they had possessed no previous existence.

Standing upon the summit of the principal edifice called the Buwáríyya,* in the centre of the ruins, the beholder is struck with astonishment at the enormous accumulation of mounds and ancient relics at his feet. An irregular circle, nearly six miles in circumference, is defined by the traces of an earthen rampart, in some places forty feet high. An extensive platform of undulating mounds, brown and scorched by the burning sun, and cut up by innumerable channels and ravines, extends, in a general direction north and south, almost up to the wall, and occupies the greatest part of the enclosed area. As at Niffar, a wide channel divides the platform into two unequal parts, which vary in height from twenty to fifty feet; upon it are situated the principal edifices of Warka. On the western edge of the northern portion rise, in solemn grandeur, masses of bricks which have accumulated around the lower stories of two rectangular buildings and their various offices, supposed to be temples, or perhaps royal tombs. The bleached and lichen-covered aspect of the surface attests the long lapse of ages which has passed since the enterprising hand of man reared them from above the surrounding level desert. Detached from the principal mass of platform are several irregularly-shaped low mounds between it and the walls, some of which are thickly strewed with lumps of black scoria, as though buildings on their summits had been destroyed by fire. At the extreme north of the platform, close to

* A on General Plan.

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the wall, a conical mound* rears its head from the surrounding waste of ruins—the barrow probably of some ancient Scyth. Warka, in the days of her greatness, was not, however, confined within the limit of her walls; her suburbs may be traced by ruined buildings, mounds, and pottery, fully three miles beyond the ramparts into the eastern desert. Due north, at the distance of two miles from the Buwáríyya, is the dome-shaped pile of Nuffayjí,† which rivals the central ruin itself in height, and stands the advanced guard of the city. Near it several smaller barrows are strewed around without apparent order or design. On the north-east is another large mound,‡ resembling, but smaller than, Nuffayjí.

Forlorn splendour and unbroken solitude reign undisturbed on the ruins. With the exception of the Tuweyba tribe, the Arabs shun a site which is held to be the abode of evil spirits, and none will dare to pass a night upon the doleful spot.

The view of the surrounding horizon is not more cheering than that of the desolate scene within the walls. During seasons of drought (for I have visited Warka at no other time), seldom is an Arab tent or herd of cattle discernible on any side. In the clear sky of morning or evening it is only possible to make out a few spots which mark the winding course of the Euphrates at the junction of the Hillah and Semáva streams, El-Khithr trees and Kála'a Dúrájí—old settlements casually inhabited.

Tel Ede on the north-north-east, Sinkara on the east-south-east, and a few date-trees on the marshes of the Káhr, are all that the eye finds to dwell upon in the opposite direction. The intervening space is a dry, barren and dismal desert, void of water, vegetation, and inhabitants. The prophecy of the coming desolation of Babylon is equally applicable to Warka:—"It shall never be

* F on Plan. † J on Plan. ‡ M on Plan.

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inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation: neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there."* For probably eighteen centuries, Warka has stood deserted and in ruins as she now appears. No wonder therefore, that her history is lost in the oblivion of the past!

The external walls of sun-dried brick enclosing the main portion of the ruins may be traced without much difficulty throughout their entire circuit. They assume the form of an irregular circle five-and-a-half miles in circumference, with slightly perceptible angles towards the cardinal points.

They attain their highest elevation on the north-east side,† where they are between forty and fifty feet above the plain, but the great quantity of rubbish lying at their base proves that their original height was considerably more. The width may have been perhaps twenty feet.

From this point they trend away towards the south, gradually decreasing in height until they become level with the desert, exhibiting at intervals traces of the brick-work itself. For the most part, however, they have long since lost all marks of their origin, and cannot be distinguished from a simple earthen rampart. Many breaks occur along this portion of the walls, some of which were undoubtedly entrances.

From south to west the course of the wall is only discernible from the desert itself by the darker colour of the soil and the remains of semi-oval turrets, fifty feet apart. These were open towards the city, and possessed walls from four to five-and-a-half feet in thickness.

Towards the north-west the wall may be followed over several large mounds, covered with black slag and scoria, like the refuse of a glass factory. It is not improbable that this was the site of the furnaces where the glazed

* Isaiah xiii. 20. † Near the conical mound marked F on the Plan.

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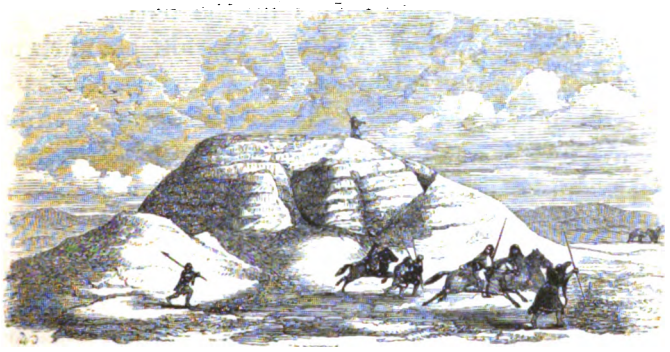
pottery hereafter alluded to was made. Pottery, vitrified and inscribed bricks, scoria, and glass, are elsewhere found in abundance on the surface of the ruins.

Of the three great edifices* which rise conspicuously from the surface of the ruins, that called Buwáríyya is not



The Buwáríyya Ruin at Warka.

only the most central, but the most lofty and ancient. At first sight it appears to be a cone, but further examination proves it to be a tower, 200 feet square, built entirely of sun-dried bricks. On excavating at its basement there was discovered, on the centre of each side, a massive buttress of peculiar construction, erected for the purpose of supporting the main edifice. Unlike Múgeyer and other Babylonian structures, the lower tower of the Buwáríyya is without any external facing of kiln-baked brickwork, its place being, however, supplied by the above-mentioned buttresses. This, together with the primitive manner in which the central portion is arranged, leads to the supposition that it is a very early structure. Sir Henry Rawlinson confirms this conclusion, by reading the name of King Urukh† upon the brick legends

* A, B, and C on the Plan.

† See inscriptions page 169. This king also built Múgeyer and Niffar.

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of the buttresses, which record the dedication of the edifice to "Sin," or the "Moon," by that monarch, who is supposed to have lived about 2230 B.C. The total height of the Buwáríyya is perhaps 100 feet above the desert plain, but only 27 feet of the internal brickwork emerges from a mass of rubbish, which slopes in a gradual descent from the summit and entirely covers up the buttresses. The sides are deeply cut and furrowed by rain channels and ravines. The sun-dried bricks are of various shapes and sizes, which is contrary to the custom in later edifices. They are rudely moulded of very incoherent earth, mixed with fragments of pottery and fresh-water shells, and vary in size from 7 to 9 inches long by 7 inches wide, and 3 or 3½ inches in thickness.

The name "Buwáríyya," in Arabic, signifies "reed mats," which term is similarly applied to other mounds in Mesopotamia, in the construction of which the reed matting is used as a new foundation for the successive layers of bricks. Reeds are placed at intervals of 4 or 5 feet, and serve to protect the earthen mass from disintegration, by projecting beyond the external surface. Four or five rows of bricks are laid horizontally under and upon each layer, and cemented in mud, but the remainder are placed lengthwise on edge, with their flat surfaces and narrow edges facing outwards. The same oblong apertures, which usually characterize edifices of this description, are observable here. The summit of the existing ruin is perfectly flat, and measures 68 feet from north to south. At one point are traces of a brick superstructure, with inscriptions of Sin-shada, who lived about 1500 B.C., and the rubbish, mixed with bitumen, on the exterior, appears to have fallen from it. We therefore conclude that Sin-shada repaired or rebuilt the upper terrace of the Buwáríyya which had been erected 800 years previously by his predecessor, Urukh, in the same manner as Nebuchadnezzar,

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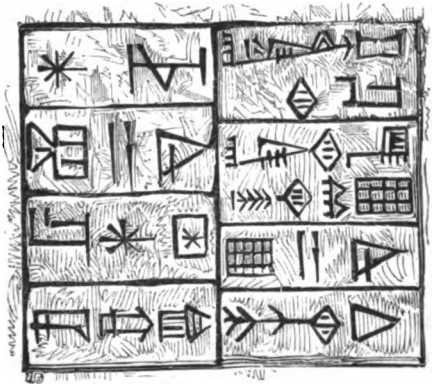
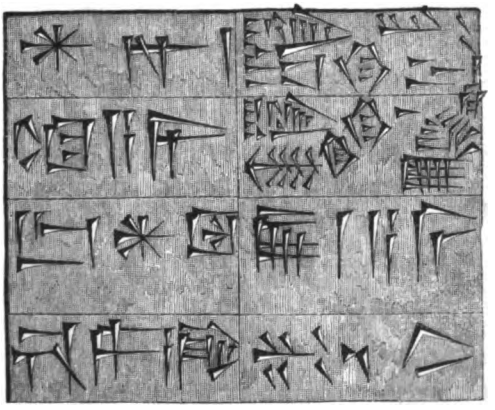
at a later period, repaired the terraces of the Bírs Nimrúd, constructed 500 years before his time.

The buttresses which have been referred to are 19 feet high, and each is divided into two equal parts, by an intervening space of 1 foot 9 inches. Each portion is 2 feet 2 inches thick, and projects 7½ feet from the unbaked central mass, against which the two parts of the buttress are united by a strong wall. The flat bricks are cemented with thick layers of bitumen, so firmly adhering together that they can with difficulty be separated. Each brick is inscribed with eight lines of complicated monogrammic characters, peculiar to the earlier cuneiform inscriptions. The greater number are stamped, but in some the inscriptions are written, and exhibit the manner in which the stamped monograms are constituted.



Stamped Inscription of Urukh in Monograms.



Inscription of Urukh in ordinary cuneiform characters.

I destroyed a great portion of a buttress, and dug a considerable distance into the western angle of the internal mass of brickwork, for the purpose

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of discovering the dedicatory cylinders, which Mr Taylor's excavations at Múgeyer proved to be deposited at the corners of Babylonian edifices. It is, however, probable that they had long previously been destroyed by the fall of brickwork, and therefore my search for these valued records was fruitless.

The Buwáríyya stands at the western angle of a large enclosure, 350 feet long by 270 feet wide, which evidently extended around it, and reached to the south-east edge of the great platform. Distinct walls of vitrified bricks, bearing the name of Merodach-gina, 1400 B.C., are traceable in different places.

Without extensive excavations it would be impossible to understand the original plan or disposition of the numerous walls which appear from under masses of unbaked brick. It is probable that they acted as supports, and served to prevent outward pressure.

The south-east portion of the enclosure is traversed by numerous ravines, which penetrate deeply into the mound, and expose several of these walls. Wherever trenches were opened at this locality they revealed the same unbaked mass intersected by rectangular walls cemented in bitumen.

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CHAPTER XVI.

"Wuswas" Ruin—The Earliest Explorer—Rude Ornamentation—Columnar Architecture—Palm Logs the Probable Type—New Light on the External Architecture of the Babylonians and Assyrians—Interior of Wuswas—The Use of the Arch in Ancient Mesopotamia—Search for Sculptures—The Warrior in Basalt.

By far the most interesting structure at Warka is that called "Wuswas."* It is contained in a spacious walled quadrangle, the eastern corner of which is 840 feet from the Buwáríyya. Its north-western side is on the edge of the great platform. The enclosure is oblong, and includes an area of more than 7½ acres; the north-west and south-east sides respectively measure 650 feet and 500 feet. All the buildings at Warka point with one corner to the true north, and, this being likewise the case at Múgeyer, I presume that such arrangement obtained generally in Chaldæan architecture, perhaps for astronomical purposes. The walls of the enclosure are now reduced to long, high ridges of bricks and mortar. A large court on the level of the platform occupies the eastern corner, and is approached by an entrance through each of its external walls. A third gateway on the south-west led to a terrace in front of the principal building.

A second court, at a lower level, occupies a corresponding position at the north angle, and likewise approaches the main structure, probably by a flight of steps. A large

* B on Plan.

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gateway gives entrance to this court from the north-west.

The remainders of the north-west and south-east sides are elevated terraces, parallel with the walls of the principal edifice, that on the north-west being of considerable width.

The most important and conspicuous portion of this great enclosure is the structure on the south-west side, which gives its present name to the ruin. It is said to be derived from a negro called Wuswas, who, a few years ago, observed a wall on the south-west side, and began to make an excavation, under the impression that he would find gold within. After penetrating fifteen feet through solid brick-work he discovered a valuable ring, but one of the saints of the Mohammedan calendar appeared in a vision, and warned him that his act of spoliation was sinful, and that, if he still persisted in his wicked project, paradise and its húrís would not be his future lot. Wuswas was alarmed, but, unwilling to part with the treasure he had already acquired, disappeared, and it is to this day unknown whether he had been torn to pieces

The Excavation at Wuswas.

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by wild beasts, or whether the Mohammedan saint had forthwith transported him to the seventh heaven. The superstitious Arabs have never since dared to enter the excavation, although they have no hesitation in ejecting the bones of the dead from the tenements where they have for ages reposed. The excavation made by Wuswas shewed an act of patience and perseverance foreign to the Arab character, and exposed a thickness of walling which is, at first sight, likely to lead to the erroneous conclusion that the great pile was a solid mass. This ruin is 246 feet long by 174 feet wide, and stands 80 feet above the plain. On three sides are terraces of different elevations, but the fourth or south-west presents a perpendicular façade, at one place 23 feet in height.

Like all Babylonian and Assyrian ruins, the Wuswas building is elevated on a lofty artificial platform 50 feet high, which has perhaps been added to that of the Buwáríyya. The enormous amount of rubbish which encumbers its summit, sides, and base, gives some slight idea of the magnitude of the edifice, and excites unbounded surprise. It rises from 2 to 6 feet above the building, completely fills every chamber, measures from 20 to 30 feet from the base of the external walls, and extends down the slope of the mound—a truncated pyramid of broken bricks and mortar.

At my second visit, on returning from Mohammerah, I remarked certain architectural peculiarities, which subsequently induced me to undertake excavations on the site of Wuswas's labours. Trenches were therefore directed against the façade, where there appeared a probability that an entrance might be effected into the interior. The immense accumulation of fallen brickwork rendered excavation a work of considerable danger, and required the greatest care to prevent the workmen being buried up by the giving way of the loose material. Appliances

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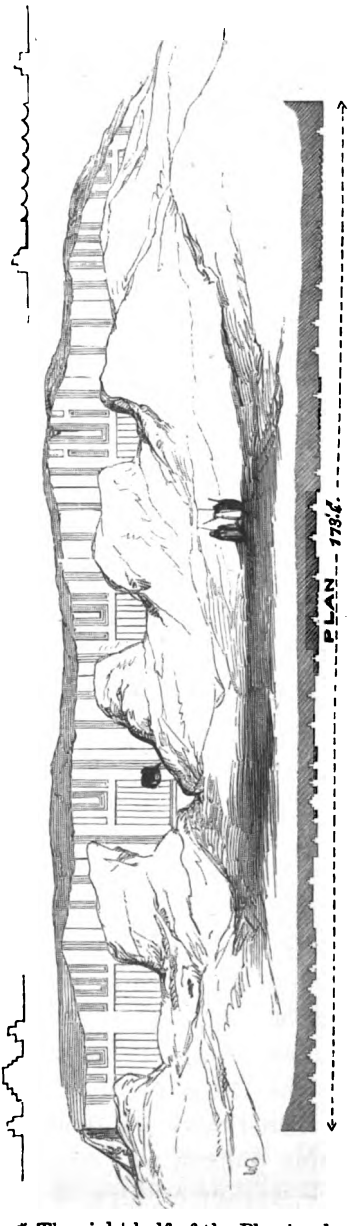

Elevation and Plan of the South-west Façade at Wuswas Ruin.*

like stays or shoring were unprocurable in the deserts; we laboured in the most primitive manner.

The edge of a broken wall was, in the first place, laid bare at the summit, and the uniformity of its outline induced me to excavate at four different localities, but it soon became evident that neither entrance nor window ever existed on this side; at the same time, it afforded the first glimpse of Babylonian architecture, exhibiting peculiarities so remarkable and original as to pronounce at once its undoubted antiquity. It furnishes a new page to the annals of architectural art.

The façade measures 174 feet in length, and, as before stated, in some places 23 feet in height. With this elevation, it is not difficult to complete a restoration of the entire front to that height. Although the portions un-

* The right half of the Plan is a horizontal section through the columns—

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covered possess no beauty comparable with the artistic conceptions and productions of subsequent ages, a broad air of grandeur must have attended the immense size and height of the edifice. Such buildings as those at Warka must have been imposing in the extreme.

At the base of the ruin a narrow terrace, 3½ feet wide, coated with a thin layer of white plaster, runs the entire length of the façade. From this, in one unbroken perpendicular line, without a single moulding, rises the main wall, which is subdivided by slight recesses 12½ feet long. Nothing can be more plain, more rude, or, in fact, more unsightly than the decoration employed upon this front; but it is this very aspect—this very ugliness, which vouches for the originality of the style. It has long been a question whether the column was employed by the Babylonians as an architectural embellishment. The Wuswas façade settles this point beyond dispute. Upon the lower portion of the building are groups of seven half-columns repeated seven times—the rudest perhaps which were ever reared, but built of moulded semicircular bricks, and securely bonded to the wall. The entire absence of cornice, capital, base, or diminution of shaft, so characteristic of other columnar architecture, and the peculiar and original disposition of each group in rows like palm logs, suggest the type from which they sprang. It is only to be compared with the style adopted by aboriginal inhabitants of other countries, and was evidently derived from the construction of wooden edifices. The same arrangement of uniform reeds or shafts, placed side by side, as at Wuswas, occurs in many Egyptian structures, and in the generality of Mexican buildings before the Spanish invasion. It is that which is likely to

the other half a section through the recesses of the upper story. The only portion of the façade exposed before the excavations was around the hole dug by the negro, of which an engraving is given on page 172.

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originate among a rude people before the introduction of the arts.

There is not a line in the façade to which foreign influence can be traced. In place of a plinth, a fillet of plaster, 1½ inch high, re-connects the line of wall broken by the successive groups of columns. In similar manner above them a horizontal band passes flush with the wall. The otherwise monotonous character of this portion of the front is in some measure varied by the nearer arrangement of the two outward groups of columns.

From the horizontal band, immediately above the three central columns of each group, rises a stepped recess 1¾ foot deep, surmounted by a larger and a smaller crescent —a sacred emblem of Chaldæan worship. On either side of these recesses, over the first and seventh columns of each series, is a chasing, containing, in its upper half, a column similar to those before described.

The rest of the front at intervals is perpendicularly subdivided by chasings 7 inches deep, extending uninterruptedly from the terrace to the highest point of the building now remaining. This chasing occurs in many other Chaldæan ruins—at the small oratory at Mûgeyer and on the great temple at Sinkara—and may be regarded as a chief characteristic of Babylonian architectural ornamentation.

The whole front has been undoubtedly coated with white plaster from 2 to 4 inches thick, which seems to have suffered more from the fall of the upper portion of the building than from its anterior exposure to the weather. It exhibits no trace of colour.

I have entered upon the above details, because we previously knew little or nothing regarding the external architecture of the Babylonians, or of the Assyrians. It is true that the lower story of the great temple at Mûgeyer has stood exposed for centuries in good preservation, but

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it is without the peculiar features above described. At the Bírs Nimrúd, too, so little of the edifice was visible under the superincumbent pile of rubbish, and that little in such a deplorable state of ruin, that it is impossible to gain any light upon the subject. These were the only two Babylonian edifices which, previous to the discovery of Wuswas, exhibited any external features. Neither Mr Layard's excavations at Koyunjuk and Nimrúd, nor those of M. Botta at Khorsábád, furnished any idea as to the exteriors of the Assyrian palaces. Except at the grand entrance of Sargon's palace at Khorsábád, and that of Sennacherib at Koyunjuk, guarded by their colossal bulls and attendant human figures, no portion of the outer walls of an Assyrian palace had ever, up to that time, been uncovered. For the first time, then, Wuswas advances some positive data by which to reconstruct the exterior of a Ninevite palace. It is not, however, extraordinary that this had previously escaped discovery. The walls of the palaces erected by the Assyrian kings were merely composed of unbaked bricks, which, in a more humid climate than that of Chaldæa, crumbled away when they ceased to be cared for, forming a compact mass with the earth and rubbish under which they were eventually buried. Khorsábád, however, appears to have escaped the destruction which befell the other palaces of Assyria, and to have continued in a remarkably perfect condition when explored by the French Government. To the perseverance of M. Victor Place, the late French Consul at Mosul, is due the credit of having first discovered and exposed the exterior of an undoubted Assyrian edifice. It is remarkable that not only was the discovery made about the time of my excavations at Wuswas, but also that the architectural peculiarities of the two edifices are so similar that no possible doubt can be thrown on their common origin. The whole exteriors of

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the tower and hárem of Sargon, at Khorsábád, exhibit a modified representation of the Wuswas façade ; the same rude columns, without capital or base, are ranged in sets of seven together, side by side ; and the same dentated recesses or chasings separate the groups, varied only by the insertion of a single column, or a cluster of three, between them. The wall at Khorsábád unfortunately terminates before the columns have attained their full height; consequently, this portion of the Wuswas design with its crescents are not visible. Wuswas therefore still remains the most perfect exterior of its class.

I several times subsequently uncovered columns arranged in like manner, with chasings at their sides, on the exterior of the south-east palace at Nimrúd.

At a later date, Sir Henry Rawlinson ascertained that the same system of half-column groups and chasings occurs on the lowest terrace or story of the Bírs Nimrúd ; but the results of his discoveries at that locality are as yet only partially made public.

That groups of columns and double recesses were the prevailing type of Assyrian and Babylonian external architecture there can be little doubt, and future excavations in those countries may develop the fact more fully.*

This native style ceased with the introduction of Greek art and its chaste ornamentation during the occupation of the country under the Seleucidæ ; but a slight revival probably took place under the Sassanians. We have several edifices of the latter period, such as the Taukí Kesra at Ctésiphon, and the Palace of Firúzábád in Southern Persia, which in all essential particulars so much resemble Wuswas as to prove that the Sassanians borrowed most

* In several Koyunjuk sculptures, one of which is engraved in Mr Layard's "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 647, the double recesses or chasings are precisely delineated, and afford further proof—if such be required—of their adaptation to the exterior of Assyrian edifices.

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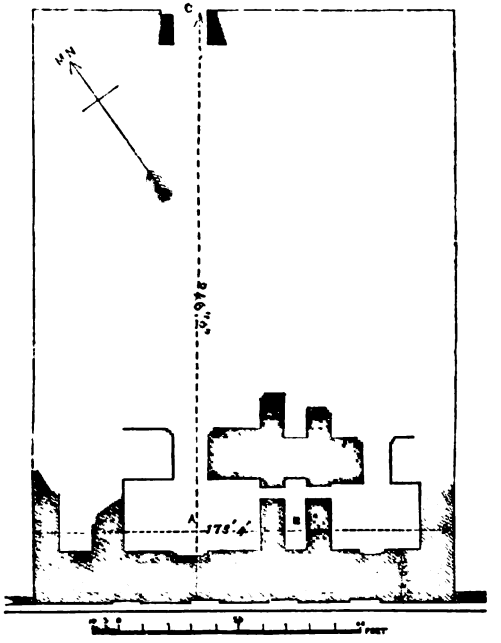
of their peculiarities from earlier native examples.* In the two buildings mentioned, we have the same dull, heavy aspect, without break or window, and the same repetition of inelegant columns and narrow arches, which take the place of stepped recesses in the earlier edifices.

Having said thus much on the external character of Wuswas, it is time to explore its interior. Here, however, I experienced much difficulty. It has been already stated that the enormous thickness of the south-west wall, and the accumulation of bricks, are likely to lead to the conclusion that the building is of solid construction. Subsequent excavations, however, proved that this is not the case but that a principal entrance,† with plain brick jambs, conducts into a large outer court, with chambers on either side. Beyond it is another hall similarly arranged. My excavations were commenced on the summit, at the south-west side, where certain hollows and lineal elevations of bricks indicated faint outlines of rooms. But the immense



Plan of the Great Edifice at Wuswas.

* Fergusson's "Illustrated Handbook of Architecture," vol. i., p. 373.
† At C.

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thickness of the walls compared with the size of the chambers, for a length of time defeated my purpose, and I was almost inclined to the belief that the great mass of building was a solid block of brickwork. Success, however, ultimately rewarded my labours, and I had the satisfaction of at least tracing the walls of nearly seven chambers, the general arrangement of which resembles, in a remarkable manner, that of the Assyrian palaces, as respects want of uniformity in size and shape, and the position of the doorway at the sides rather than the centres of the rooms. The largest chamber or hall * measures fifty-seven feet by thirty feet; and the smallest, † adjoining it, nine feet by thirty feet. A shaft was dug in the former, and the rubbish entirely cleared out of the latter to the depth of twenty-three feet and a half. The walls were rudely plastered, but did not exhibit any trace of colour. Portions of date-wood were found in the small chamber, and apertures for beams are traceable in the walls twelve feet from the brick pavement. These extend, however, only partially the length of the room, leaving a space by which light may have passed to the lower apartment, or by which a stair may have communicated between the upper and ground-floor rooms. The other chambers must have been in some measure lighted from above, but the precise mode is conjectural, since there is neither window nor door along the whole length of the front by which light could have been admitted.‡

* A of Plan. † B of Plan.

‡ In the above description of the architectural peculiarities of the Wuswas edifice, I have largely availed myself of the valuable and concise report which, at my request, Mr Boutcher prepared on the spot for the Committee of the Assyrian Excavation Fund. I take this opportunity of expressing my obligations to that gentleman for the great assistance he afforded me in my labours both in Chaldæa and Assyria, and of directing attention to the very beautiful collection of drawings which he made during the continuance of the expedition. These drawings are now deposited in the British Museum, and in the collection of the Royal Asiatic Society,

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The rubbish, as I have before mentioned, completely filled every chamber; so that, having ascertained the non-existence of sculptures in two apartments, I did not deem it advisable to explore further. This extent of rubbish, taken in connexion with the great thickness and arrangement of the walls, gives some idea of the size and roof of the fallen superstructure. On reference to the plan, it will be observed that there is a great disproportion in the relative thickness of the flank and front walls of the building, but, if we consider the wall of the façade to be the side wall of the two large chambers, its thickness may be accounted for. On further examination we shall find the *flank* walls of every chamber thicker or slighter in proportion to the width of the chamber, which is precisely what would be necessary, if, as I believe, each chamber were covered with a brick arch.

I am here induced to make a few remarks on the construction of the Assyrian palaces. In his admirably conceived restorations, Mr Fergusson* everywhere adopts the conclusion that, as the span between the walls was frequently too great to admit of the roof being supported by horizontal beams, the Assyrians had recourse to columns in preference to all other modes of building. He supports his arguments by examples derived from India, Persia, and elsewhere, and his reasoning is clear and satisfactory, as far as it goes. It may be presumptuous in me to differ from one who has so intimately investigated this and similar subjects, but it strikes me, from actual observation of these ruins, that Mr Fergusson's theory is founded in error. It is perfectly true that the Assyrians used the column, because the bases are still found—but always at doorways and not within the

and will well repay the examination of those interested in the subject of Chaldæan and Assyrian antiquities."

* "Nineveh and Persepolis Restored," p. 270 et seq.

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rooms ;—they have never yet been discovered in the latter position. When Mr Fergusson arrived at this conclusion he was not aware that the Assyrians really made use of the arch on a grand scale; but this has since been fully proved at Khorsábád, where magnificent arches, of sun-dried brick, still rest on the massive backs of the colossal bulls which guard the great gateways leading into the city, and shew that, not only did the Assyrians understand the construction of an arch, but also its use as a decorative feature.

However admirably an open chamber, supported on columns, might be suited to the lofty or cooler regions of Persia or India, where refreshing breezes at intervals relieve the heat of the day, they are not well adapted to the continuous sultriness of an Assyrian climate. The natives of Mosul, at the present day, do not use columns in preference to arches, and my belief is that customs have not much altered in that region since the days of Sennacherib. To exclude heat and rain, nothing can be better adapted than the lofty arch, as it is still there employed. The light is frequently admitted by small windows, immediately under the spring of the arch. A similar mode of lighting, I have no doubt, prevailed in the ancient palaces, than which a better system could not be adopted for the display of their wonderful bas-reliefs. These never look so well as in a trench, with the subdued light admitted through a small hole above. The great thickness of the walls in the Nineveh palaces is, I am convinced, due to the fact that the rooms were vaulted, as first suggested by M. E. Flandin.* An arch, constructed of such mud bricks as those still standing at Khorsábád, would in its fall cover up and preserve the sculptures uninjured, exactly as they are disclosed to us by the excavations. This, too, will account

* "Revue des Deux Mondes."

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for the great quantity of earth which fills all the chambers of the palaces.* This is precisely what has happened at Wuswas with the brickwork of the superstructure, and which I have little doubt was vaulted.

The bricks used in the construction of this edifice measure twelve and a half inches square by three inches thick. Each is marked on its under side with a deeply impressed triangular stamp or wedge, which may here be regarded as a sacred emblem, as it certainly is upon the altar in the National Library at Paris, and on many Babylonian cylinders. This stamp undoubtedly indicates the character of the edifice in which it so repeatedly occurs.

In addition to this wedge-shaped stamp, a few bricks are likewise impressed with an oblong die, bearing thirteen lines of minute cuneiform characters, resembling those which occur on clay cylinders, but so extremely indistinct that it is quite impossible to copy the legend. Sir Henry Rawlinson, on examining one of these, was inclined, from the apparent simplicity of a few characters, to regard them, not as Babylonian, but as Parthian, or even late Sassanian ; and he therefore pronounced the building of Wuswas to belong to a post-Babylonian age. He argued, too, that there was nothing Babylonian in the character, design, or architecture of the building, which would favour the idea of its greater antiquity. This was, however, previous to M. Place's discoveries at Khorsábád, and to Sir Henry Rawlinson's own excavations at the

* The vaulted roofs of the houses and mosques at Mosul are, however, constructed of gypsum plaster and broken bricks, the terraces being covered with mud and earth. Such may have been the case in the palaces of ancient Nineveh. The numerous fragments of bricks and lumps of decomposing gypsum in the soil above the sculptures, is strong presumptive evidence that this plan of constructing their roofs was adopted by the Assyrians. This explanation would entirely do away with the necessity for columns, and the difficulty of erecting vaulted arches of *mud bricks* over rooms *thirty-three feet wide*, which is the chief objection raised to the system of arched roofing at Nineveh.

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Birs Nimrúd—at both which places, as I have elsewhere mentioned, precisely the same architectural features were met with in edifices of undoubted Assyrian and Babylonian origin. Admitting the possibility that the Sassanians adopted in full the style of the Babylonians, it is extremely improbable that it should have remained wholly uninfluenced by the introduction of a more classic taste during the Greek occupation of Mesopotamia; and that a style so rude and unsightly should have endured unchanged even during the dominion of the Persians, who, long previous to the Parthians and Sassanians, were far advanced in art. Such, we know, was not the case; and, although they may have retained the elements of the Babylonian style, all the Sassanian edifices with which we are acquainted exhibit a decided advance in art, and an adaptation of the more elegant designs of the West.

I cannot therefore conform to the opinion that the Wuswas temple is either a Parthian or a Sassanian structure. Although it has hitherto yielded no records to decide the point satisfactorily, I would fain believe that such will ultimately be recovered to prove its undoubted Babylonian origin. It is impossible at present to assign to it other than an approximate date. From the discovery of a few fragments of bricks, bearing the name of Sin-Shada—probably derived from the upper story of the Buwáríyya, and built into the entrance jamb—it cannot be older than 1500 B.C. (the probability is that it is much later), and, as the style of architecture seems to have been at its height in the times of Sargon and Nebuchadnezzar, Wuswas temple was perhaps erected about the seventh or eighth century B.C.

With regard to the object for which this immense edifice was built, it is, of course, presumptuous to pronounce an opinion with so little to guide us. The wedge, as a sacred emblem, might equally well be applied to a

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palace, a temple, or a royal tomb. It will, I fear, be long before any positive data can be obtained to decide the question. The fact, however, that Warka was a great Necropolis, and that the Greek historian Arrian says that the Assyrian kings were buried somewhere in the Chaldæan marshes, rather tends to the supposition that two at least of the monster edifices at Warka were among the tombs of the kings to which Arrian alludes.*

With the exception of several fragments of coloured enamelled bricks, similar to those found on the ruins of the Kasr at Babylon, there was nothing in or around the edifice which indicated the mode of decoration employed; and as Wuswas failed to yield sculptured bas-reliefs, we must, I fear, give up all hope of discovering works of this nature in Babylonia. It is not, however, surprising that the palaces and temples of this region should be without sculptured slabs, because the alluvial plains of the lower Tigris and Euphrates do not furnish stone suited to the purpose. Any that might be used must have been procured at great expense, and conveyed a considerable distance down the river. Bricks and plaster, therefore, naturally took the place of the gypsum slabs which adorned the palaces of Assyria, and were obtainable in any quantity from the quarries in the neighbourhood of Nineveh.

Warka, however, is not without one specimen of ancient sculpture. My friend Mr T. Kerr Lynch (who took advantage of my last journey to accompany me from Bághdád on a visit to the ruins) in passing over the mounds, directed my attention to an isolated lump of basalt projecting through the soft and yielding soil. It lay about 400 feet south of the Buwáríyya upon the slope of the great platform.† On turning over the block, it proved

* Arrian de Exped. Alex., vii. 22.

† At I on the General Plan.

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to be a fragment of coarse columnar basalt, nearly four feet long, but broken into four pieces. Three sides were uncut, but the fourth bore upon it a rude figure in low relief. A warrior was represented in short tunic, confined round the waist with a girdle. In the belt was a short sword or dagger. The long hair was bound round the head with a narrow fillet. The left arm crossed the breast, while the right, raised and wielding a short spear, was in the act of striking a prostrate foe or animal, which did not, however, appear on the sculpture. The design was very spirited, and the outline remarkably correct, but the execution was rough and unfinished. There was a certain archaic character about the bas-relief which marked it as one of the earliest relics on the ruins. The Arabs, seldom accustomed to see blocks of stone upon the mounds, invariably regard them as talismans or treasures. The sculpture in question was so looked on by my Tuweyba friends, who have little respect for anything but gold. In hope of finding its interior filled with gold, they had lighted fires around it at various times; but, observing the little effect thus produced, they managed to break it by other means. It had suffered considerably from exposure and ill-usage, and was valueless to bring away as a work of art.

This discovery caused me to expend much time and labour in its vicinity, searching for the locality from whence it had been derived, and where I imagined there might be other specimens of a similar kind. My work, however, resulted in total disappointment.

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CHAPTER XVII.

New Styles of Decorative Art—Cone-work—Pot-work—Arab Aversion to Steady Labour—Blood-Feud between the Tuweyba and El-Bej—The Encounter Frustrated—The Feud Healed—Diversions after the Work of the Day.

ABOUT one hundred feet north of the sculpture just described, close to the southern angle of the Buwáríyya enclosure, I was fortunate in meeting with the remains of an edifice,* which bears analogy to that of Wuswas, and is, without exception, perfectly unique in its construction. Situated nearly on a level with the desert, it may also be regarded as of early origin, and although only a fragment, it yields to none in interest. I had frequently noticed a number of small yellow terra-cotta

Terra-cotta Cone, natural size.

cones, three inches and a half long, arranged in half circles on the surface of the mound, and was much perplexed to imagine what they were. They proved to be part of a wall, thirty feet long, entirely composed of these cones imbedded in a cement of mud mixed

* At E on Plan.

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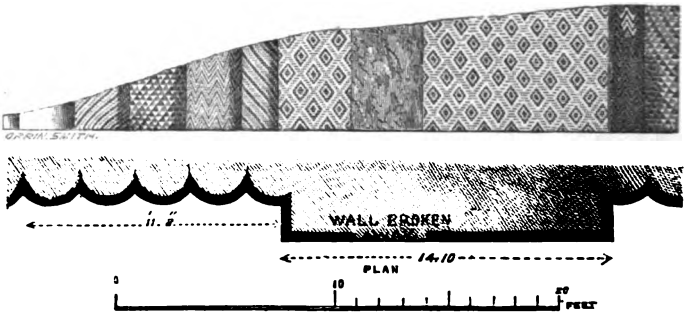
with chopped straw. They were fixed horizontally with their circular bases facing outwards. Some had been dipped in red and black colour, and were arranged in various ornamental patterns, such as diamonds, triangles, zigzags, and stripes, which had a remarkably pleasing effect. The wall which these cones ornamented consisted



Elevation and Plan of the Terra-cotta Cone Wall, Warka.

of a plane surface fourteen feet ten inches long, broken away for a short space in the centre, and projecting one foot nine inches beyond a series of half-columns, arranged precisely as in the Wuswas façade side by side. Two of these columns appeared on one side of the projection, and six on the other. Each differed from its next neighbour in design, but that first from the plane wall only measured one foot eight inches in diameter, while the others were each two feet six inches. It would have been interesting to have ascertained that the number of columns in each group agreed with those at Wuswas, but unfortunately the wall ceased before completing the number—seven, and the height of the whole did not exceed six feet. Trenches in various directions failed to discover other portions of this edifice; neither could any trace of walling behind the cones be distinguished from the surrounding mass of earth. That some supporting wall formerly existed is, however, evident from the slender nature of the remaining fabric.

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In ancient Egyptian tombs, similar but much larger cones are found, with hieroglyphs stamped upon their bases, several specimens of which are in the British Museum. They are supposed to have a sepulchral character, and to have been let into the wall at the entrance of the tomb, although they have never been observed in that position. The hieroglyphs are probably the names of the deceased. No marks or inscriptions occur on these Warka cones, but there is every reason to suppose that they were in a similar manner connected with the burial of the dead. The ascertained fact, before noticed, that the site was a vast cemetery, is strong presumptive evidence in favour of this conclusion.

Cones of the same kind are of frequent occurrence upon the ruins of the great platform, sometimes firmly fixed together in strong white plaster or cement, but no other building was observed with them *in situ*. There is, however, little doubt that several might be discovered by largely excavating in the mounds. Similar cones are found in many other ruins of undoubted Babylonian age, which, unlike Warka, have escaped being built upon by succeeding races. Mr Taylor discovered them plentifully, both at Múgeyer and Abú Shehreyn, at which latter place they occurred ten inches in length, composed of limestone and marble, and sometimes with a rim round the edge filled with copper.* They were, undoubtedly, much used as an architectural decoration in Lower Chaldæa, and always in connexion with sepulchral remains.

Cones, or rather horns of baked clay, frequently occur on the same ruins, inscribed round the thick part of the circumference in early and complicated cuneiform characters. They, however, appear to have been attached to some other object, and are usually bent at the summit

* See Mr Taylor's Memoirs on the Múgeyer and Abú Shehreyn, in the "Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society," vol. xv., pages 268, 274, 411, 415.

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of the cone. One of these, obtained by me at Warka, bears on it the name of Bel or Belus. It is engraved in Mr Layard's "Nineveh and Babylon," p. 564, and is now in the British Museum.

Warka is a complete mine for extraordinary and unheard-of modes of decoration in architecture. Within a stone's throw of the south-west façade at Wuswas, is another mound crowned with a curious building, which has some points of resemblance to the cone-brick structure last described. It rises abruptly from the base of the artificial mound* on which the Wuswas ruin stands, and appears to have been a tower of unbaked brick. My attention was particularly directed to it by the enormous quantity of broken pottery and conical ends of jars which lay around. On excavating midway up its north side, I came upon a kind of basement or perhaps terrace of mud-brick abutting against a mass of compact earth. Upon the latter was raised a wall composed entirely of unbaked bricks, and a peculiar species of conical vase, the fragments of which lay strewed on the surface. This wall was traced about one hundred feet, but was extremely irregular in plan, at one point projecting forward four feet, then rounding off and receding eight feet. It afterwards assumed its original direction for forty-three feet, then made an obtuse angle, and finally bore away as before, when I ceased to follow it further. Above the foundation were a few layers of mud-bricks, superimposed on which were three rows of these vases, arranged horizontally, mouths outward, and immediately above each other. This order of brick and pot-work was repeated thrice, and was succeeded upwards by a mass of unbaked bricks. The vases vary in size from ten to fifteen inches in length, with a general diameter at the mouth of four inches. The cup or interior is only six inches deep, consequently

* At L on the General Plan.

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the conical end is solid. The cup was formed by a regular turning apparatus. These vases, from their great thickness throughout, are capable of bearing very considerable pressure, although the greatest proportion of them was broken by the superincumbent mass of earth. With their circular mouths outwards they produced a very strange effect—more striking even than that of the painted cone edifice already described.

It is difficult to conceive the purpose for which these vases were designed. We know, however, that large inflated vases were sometimes built into the walls of the Greek rooms, for the purpose of making the choruses resound during their revels; but in this case the vases were within, not outside a chamber, and had spacious, instead of extremely narrow and shallow cups. The vases at Warka could not therefore have been applied to the same use. Excepting as another application of the cone for an ornamental design, it is difficult to conceive their utility, but it is not improbable that the same system of architectural embellishment may be traced in the tasteful designs of vases and pipe-tiles, which form such elegant open-work patterns in the terrace walls of Mosul and other Eastern towns on the tops of the houses, where the natives sleep during the hot nights of summer. The interior of this structure appeared to be wholly composed of mud bricks and earth. An excavation was made into its centre without yielding any further information.

Separated on the south from this incomprehensible building and from that of Wuswas by a deep ravine, is a second immense structure* which resembles Wuswas in area and general disposition of its plan and offices, except that it has no external court. The bricks are of the same size and make, and are impressed with a similar triangular

* C on the General Plan.

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stamp. It is in like manner encumbered with rubbish which covers its summit and sides, but it is more massive and lofty than Wuswas, and consequently more imposing in the distance. Both edifices were probably erected about the same time, and for a similar purpose, and fell to ruins together. Having failed to make any discoveries of importance in the interior of Wuswas, I did not attempt excavations at this edifice, because the immense expense and danger attending the removal of the bricks were scarcely counterbalanced by the probability of any adequate result being obtained.

The Arabs, moreover, were unused to such severe labour, and could with difficulty be persuaded to work in these piles of bricks. Their whole lives had been spent in the open desert with their clubs and spears, either attacking their foes or defending their tents. They could scarcely brook the degradation of being employed like felláhs or day-labourers,—while the continuous work, without any corresponding result, was almost beyond the endurance of their sanguine temperaments. It would have been impossible to have kept them at the excavations had there not been a constant dread of attack from without, —and mutual jealousy among the three tribes employed. The signal that human beings were seen in the horizon was hailed by me with pleasure, because the excitement of a few minutes relieved the ill-suppressed grumbling of hours. The appearance of one of my workmen on the summit of the Buwáríyya, waving a piece of black rag on a spear, produced a general ferment. Implements were thrown aside, the war-cry was raised, and a general rush took place to the central ruin. Each party ranged itself round its acknowledged sheikh, dancing, yelling, grunting, and throwing their spears and clubs into the air in a state of the most extraordinary excitement, which did not cease till they were completely exhausted. When the supposed

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danger passed away, all returned to their work with renewed goodwill and energy.

On one occasion only was there any positive danger. A strong party of the Suweyd division of El Bej Bedouins, numbering about two hundred tents, crossed the Euphrates, and encamped with their flocks, herds, and at least one thousand camels, within sight of my little settlement and the ruins. How their flocks found subsistence in that barren desert was utterly beyond my comprehension. They must have speedily demolished all the scanty supply of camel's thorn on the bank of the river, because in a few days they again decamped eastwards. The day after their arrival, one of the inferior sheikhs, with a small party of the tribe, passed through the ruins on his way to pay his respects to the Sheikh of the Muntefik. The Tuweyba workmen were in a dreadful state of alarm, because there was blood-feud between them and El Bej, which arose when Sá'dún, the patron of the Tuweyba, was at enmity with the Wádí four years previously. At his instigation the Mádán tribes attacked and robbed these Bedouins of their cattle, several men being killed on either side. The Tuweyba audaciously defied all the laws of honour, and outraged all the fine feelings of the high-class Arabs, by stripping the wife of the Wádí, whom they accidentally encountered, of every article of clothing and jewellery upon her person. Nothing could excuse such an indignity. It is for acts such as this that the Mádán are regarded by the Bedouins and more honourable Arabs in the light of beasts and "dogs," as they were called by my Muntefik guards. The sheikh, however, behaved well when he encountered his foes at Warka, and promised there should be no fighting while the Tuweyba were under my protection, adding:—"You are a stranger in the land, and El Bej has no desire to act inhospitably to strangers;—but for your presence the

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Tuweyba would have been attacked long ago!" On departing, he left a horseman behind to look after the safety of my excavators.

On the day following this meeting, a scene took place which might have resulted in serious consequences. It so happened that I had remained in camp to prepare for the departure of a messenger conveying letters to Bághdád. A large number of Bedouins went up from their tents to the mound with the evident intention of creating mischief. They first of all accosted my servant Ovannes, peremptorily demanded tobacco, and followed him from trench to trench, repeating their demand with much insolence and abuse, and finally turning upon the Tuweyba, whom they endeavoured to excite by threats and hard names. The horseman, who had been left to care for our safety, without hesitation seized the ringleader, and would have tied and beaten him with the assistance of the Tuweyba, if Ovannes had not very properly interfered. The Tuweyba were highly exasperated at the insults heaped on them, and were with the greatest difficulty restrained by my overseers from making an attack upon the peace-breakers. Ovannes, who had frequently shewn himself equal to an emergency, and who possessed a much more courageous spirit than is generally evinced by natives of the country, mounted a horse, and rode off at full speed to the Bej camp. He had ascertained that it was only an inferior sheikh of the tribe who had granted his protection, but the great chief, Tellág-ibn-Terríf, still remained to be propitiated. Ovannes rode directly up to the sheikh's tent, demanding to see him and to know if Tellág had instructed his people to act as they had done. Tellág declared they had done so without his knowledge; whereon Ovannes dismounted, and, as a stranger, required his protection for ourselves and the workmen.

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Tellág, like a true Bedouin, struck by the blunt, straightforward manner of Ovannes, expressed his sorrow at what had occurred, and repeated the promise previously made, that as long as he continued in the neighbourhood, there should be no dissension between the Bej and the Tuweyba. Coffee was introduced as the bond of contract, and they were in the act of vowing eternal friendship when the horseman, who had taken part in the disturbance, rushed in, and began to abuse Tellág in strong terms for allowing his people to create a quarrel after the promise made by the absent sheikh. Tellág endured his reproofs for some time in tolerable patience, but at last got up and repeatedly struck the horseman on the face, who in turn became exasperated, and attempted to spear Tellág, when Ovannes got between them. Our champion then ran out of the tent, and, in his excessive indignation, speared some half-dozen camels belonging to the man who had been the chief cause of the disturbance.

Tellág kept his word. The next morning he paid me a visit, we broke bread together, and were from that moment sworn friends. I was subsequently indebted to him for several acts of kindness, and, under his safeguard, was enabled to reach many points in the interior of the Jezíreh which would have been otherwise impossible. Before quitting the country, I had the satisfaction of healing the feud between the Bej and the Tuweyba, and the compact was finally sealed by the latter agreeing to pay Tellág a tribute of thirty sheepskins for the ensuing year!

The journey of four miles and a half to the mounds, and the same distance back to camp every day, was a fatiguing and tedious process; nevertheless it was absolutely necessary that it should be performed, and we beguiled the weariness of the way to the best of our ability. Every morning before sunrise the implements

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were distributed to the workmen, with which, their clubs and their spears, they set out for the mounds in separate parties according to their tribes. It was amusing to see how clannish they were, the members of each tribe congregating together, and singing in opposition their own peculiar war-cry. Sometimes they would jog along in compact columns, singing a low, monotonous chant, while their bodies swayed to and fro in keeping time. At others, especially when the day's work was concluded, they would become more excited, perform a war-dance, advance and retire, yell and throw up their spears, as if feigning an engagement. At one time they would regard me as their chief, dance round my horse, brandish their spears and pretend to defend me against an unseen foe; at another I was an enemy, and they would unite forces to charge me, with sparkling eyes and shewing their white teeth in excessive delight. Now and then they would challenge me to a race, and the whole party would set off at full speed, seemingly untired in spite of their hard day's labour. Notwithstanding their wretchedness, they were a happy, careless race, easily pleased and easily excited. With all their faults, (which were those arising from circumstances rather than disposition,) they were amenable to kindness, and might be soon rendered useful members of society under proper guidance.

When it is considered that the chief occupation of these Mádán Arabs is to rob and plunder without discrimination, and that I went among them a stranger, without introduction, for the sake of excavating into the mounds which they regarded in the light of a gold mine, it is highly creditable to their liberality and tolerance that they offered no opposition to my proceedings. It is true that they were paid for their labours; but there is no reason why they should not have proved

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faithless to a ghyáwr just as to one of their own race, and have stripped me of all I possessed previous to my departure from among them. The Tuweyba considered Warka to be their own peculiar property, and made considerable profit by ransacking the tombs for treasure.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

The absence of Tombs in the Mounds of Assyria—Their abundance in Chaldæa—Warka a vast Cemetery—Clay Sarcophagi of various forms—Top-shaped Vase, or "Babylonian Urn"—Oval Dish-cover Shape—Slipper-shape—Difficulties of Removal—Excitement of the Arabs—Gold Ornaments—Coins—Vases—Terra-Cotta Penates—Light-fingered Arabs—The Ordeal—Endurance of Pain—Earliest Relics.

It is a remarkable fact that, in spite of the long succession of years during which excavations have been carried on by the English and French Governments in the mounds of Assyria, not a single instance has been recorded of undoubted Assyrian sepulture. It is true that Mr Layard considers the great cone at Nimrúd to have been a royal tomb, and that I myself opened a rude vault, seventeen feet below the floor of the south-east palace at the same locality; yet, in the one case, no human remains were found, and in the other, there was no positive evidence of their true age.* The natural inference therefore is, that the Assyrians either made away with their dead by some other method than by burial, or else that they conveyed them to some distant locality. If, however, Assyria be without its cemeteries, Chaldæa is full of them; every mound is an ancient burial-place between Niffar and Múgeyer! It would be

* The tombs which Mr Layard examined *above* the south-east palace, Nimrúd, and those discovered by Mr Vice-Consul Rassam at Koyúnjuk, were undoubtedly of post-Assyrian date.

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too much, with our present knowledge, to say positively that Chaldæa was the necropolis of Assyria, but it is by no means improbable that such was the case. Arrian,* the Greek historian, in describing Alexander's sail into the marshes south of Babylon, distinctly states that most of the sepulchres of the Assyrian kings were there constructed, and the same position is assigned them in the Peutingerian tables. The term Assyria however, in the old geographers, is frequently applied to Babylonia, and the tombs alluded to may therefore be those only of the ancient kings of Babylonia. Still, it is likely that the Assyrians regarded with peculiar reverence that land out of which Asshur went forth and builded Nineveh, and that they interred their dead around the original seats of their forefathers.

Whether this were so or not, the whole region of Lower Chaldæa abounds in sepulchral cities of immense extent. By far the most important of these is Warka, where the enormous accumulation of human remains proves that it was a peculiarly sacred spot, and that it was so esteemed for many centuries. It is difficult to convey anything like a correct notion of the piles upon piles of human relics which there utterly astound the beholder. Excepting only the triangular space between the three principal ruins, the whole remainder of the platform, the whole space between the walls, and an unknown extent of desert beyond them, are everywhere filled with the bones and sepulchres of the dead. There is probably no other site in the world which can compare with Warka in this respect; even the tombs of ancient Thebes do not contain such an aggregate amount of mortality. From its foundation by Urukh until finally abandoned by the Parthians—a period of probably 2500 years—Warka appears to have been a sa-

* De Exped. Alex., vii. 22.

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cred burial-place! In the same manner as the Persians at the present day convey their dead from the most remote corners of the Sháh's dominions, and even from India itself, to the holy shrines of Kerbella and Meshed 'Alí, so, doubtless, it was the custom of the ancient people of Babylonia to transport the bones of their deceased relatives and friends to the necropolis of Warka and other sites in the dread solitude of the Chaldæan marshes. The two great rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, would like the Nile in Egypt afford an admirable means of conveying them from a distance, even from the upper plains of Assyria.*

I was nowhere enabled to ascertain how deep in the mounds the funereal remains extend, although in several instances trenches were driven to the depth of thirty feet, beyond which the extreme looseness of the soil prevented my continuing the excavations with safety to the workmen; but I have every reason to believe that the same continuous mass of dead reaches to the very base of the highest portion of the central platform—a depth of sixty feet. On this account there is considerable difficulty in obtaining information concerning the most ancient mode of disposing of the dead at Warka. It is only at the edges of the mounds where least built upon, that the undoubted primitive tombs and their accompaniments occur.

In a country where stone is not procurable, the most natural material for architectural and domestic use is clay. This is abundant in the plains of the Euphrates. Not only were the edifices of Chaldæa, as we have seen,

* At Bághdád a custom prevails which is derived from a period long anterior to the rise of Mohammedanism, and perhaps connected with some ancient ceremony attending the transport of the dead. When a person is sick, a relative fastens a lighted taper to a piece of wood, commits it to the stream of the Tigris, and prays for the recovery of his friend. Should the light be extinguished before it recedes from his sight, he concludes that all hope is past.

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constructed of clay-brick, but the same material in a modified form was adapted to the manufacture of small utensils and extended even to sepulchral vases. The invention of the potter appears to have been racked in designing new forms, and their endless variety throughout Chaldæa may eventually prove of much use in determining the age of the ruins where each occurs. In the same way several different forms of funereal jars and sarcophagi have prevailed at certain distinct periods, the dates of which are ascertained by means of accompanying relics.

The earliest and most common form throughout Babylonia, and the one which prevailed down to the time of the Parthians, is the large, top-shaped vase, well known as the "Babylonian urn." It is lined inside with bitumen, and has its mouth usually covered with bricks, but many at Warka possess a cover of the same material cemented to the urn. They contain the bones of a human being, or only a single head, with engraved cylinders and gems, beads and neck ornaments, and rings cut out of marine shells. Sometimes two of these vessels are placed mouth to mouth, and then cemented together, one mouth fitting into the other with great exactness; such contain one or more bodies.

Another undoubtedly early form is very curious and original. It resembles an oval dish-cover, the sides sloping outwards towards the base which rests on a projecting rim. The dimensions vary from four to seven feet long, about two feet wide, and from one to three feet deep. On carefully removing this cover, the skeleton is seen reclining generally on the left side, but trussed like a fowl, the legs being drawn up and bent at the knees to fit the size of the cover. Sometimes the skull rests on the bones of the left hand, while those of the right holding cylinders of agate or meteoric stone, and small personal ornaments, have fallen into a copper bowl in front. In one instance

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I ascertained that an enormous quantity of hair was confined in a finely-netted head-dress, the meshes of which were distinctly discernible. There were also fragments of blue linen upon various parts of the skeleton, and the remains of a wooden box, which had contained two marine shells* (a murex and a cone) of the same species as those occurring abundantly in the ruins. The bones of the toes, fingers, ankles, and wrists, were encircled with bangles or rings of brass. Large jars and small sherbehs or drinking vases were placed with the body beneath the sepulchral cover. This mode of burial was not frequently observed by me at Warka, but, when it did occur, it was always at the extreme edge of the mound, nearly on a level with the plain. Mr Taylor, however, discovered a mound full of these dish-cover coffins at Múgeyer, which ruin has never, as I have already said, been built upon subsequently to the Babylonian period. With each skeleton at that locality was a shallow and extremely delicate baked-clay dish containing date-stones; and another with the bones of fowls, fish, and other remains of food. The skull lay on a sun-dried brick, containing some white substance, which was in some cases covered by remnants of a tasselled cushion of tapestry.†

Various other forms of pottery of minor importance were applied to the purposes of burial; but they all sink into insignificance when compared with the glazed earthen coffins, whose fragments occur in such amazing abundance on the surface of the mounds at Warka, as to mark them as one of the chief peculiarities of those

* The women of the Mádán Arabs at the present day ornament their hair and head-dresses with similar shells, derived from a littoral marine deposit of very modern geological formation, occurring in the region of the marshes.

† I must refer, for farther information on this subject, to Mr Taylor's interesting "Memoir on the Múgeyer." See Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xv., p. 269 *et seq.*

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remarkable ruins. As civilization progressed, they appear to have superseded the more rude descriptions of burial vases, and to have been generally adopted, not only at Warka, but also at Niffar, Zíblíyya, and other localities throughout Chaldæa. The piles on piles of these coffins are self-evident proofs of the successive generations by whom this method of burial was practised. I will not venture to guess at the date of their first introduction, but they were certainly in use at Warka, and that commonly, when the place was abandoned by the Parthians, whose curious coins occur upon the surface.

These remarkable coffins are slipper-shaped, but more elegant and symmetrical than that homely article. The oval aperture by which the body was admitted, is flattened and furnished with a depressed ledge for the reception of a lid, which was cemented with lime mortar. At the lower extremity is a semi-circular hole to prevent the bursting of the coffin by the condensed gases. The upper surface of each coffin generally—and the lid sometimes—is covered with elevated ridges, plain or ornamental; forming square panels, each of which contains a similar small embossed figure, representing a warrior in close short-fitting tunic and long loose nether garments. He stands with his arms akimbo and his legs astride; in his belt is a short sword, and on his head an enormous coiffure, of very curious appearance. The whole costume bears a striking resemblance to that with which we are well acquainted on coins and sculptures of the Parthian and Sassanian periods. The head-dress reminds me of that occurring upon the skull under the dish-cover just alluded to. The whole visible surface of the coffin is covered with a thick glazing of rich green enamel on the exterior, and of blue within the aperture, the former colour probably arising from chemical decomposition and long exposure.

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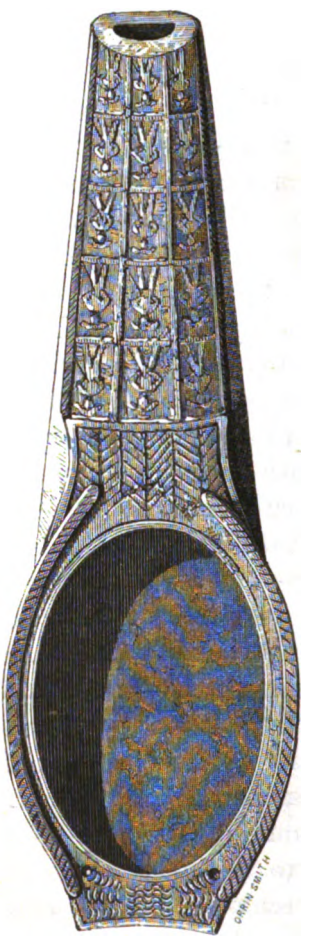

Glazed Clay Coffins from Warka.

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The material of which the coffins are composed is yellow clay, mixed with straw, and half-baked. The unglazed

Figure on Coffins (length 6¾ inches).

Lid of Coffin (length 2 feet 2 inches).

surface of the interior, as well as the bottom, is marked with impressions of the reed-matting upon which it rested during the process of manufacture.

Sometimes the coffins are glazed, but without figures, at others they are perfectly plain. Upon one are three figures which differ considerably from the rest. They are represented in short dresses, with large bushy wigs confined in netting, and carrying some article in their hands which resembles a square box. A portion of this coffin is in the British Museum.

In one instance only did I observe two lids to a coffin. The glazed specimen,* likewise in the Museum, was

Figure on Coffin (length 7 inches).

* Of which a woodcut is given above.

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broken, and lay within the aperture, protected by an unglazed one, puffed out in the centre and pierced by a small hole like the crust of a meat pie.

The coffins generally are loosely surrounded with earth, and lie, without order, upon and near each other. Many, however, are built up singly, or two together, in brick vaults cemented with lime. As the same mortar is used to fasten down the lid of the enclosed coffin, the inference is that the coffin was first placed in the position it was destined to occupy, and then that the body was put into it when *in situ*. From the fragile nature and weight of the composition, it is improbable that the coffin was carried to the mound with the dead inside.

I have observed that coffins were discovered at the depth of thirty feet below the surface, and that they probably descend to near the base of the mound. This depth and the yielding nature of the soil are opposed to the supposition of their having been buried in the usual way, and seem rather to imply that they have gradually accumulated. It is generally supposed that the ancient inhabitants of Persia—certainly the Sassanians—exposed their dead like their modern descendants the Parsees of India. I am inclined to believe that a species of exposure was practised at Warka, the body being placed in a coffin, cemented down, and left to be covered up by the drifting sand, which, as previously mentioned, is roused by the slightest breath of wind. In this manner we can account, not only for the depth below the surface, but also for the extremely small layer of fine sandy earth which intervenes between the vertical rows.

The Arabs have long been attracted by the gold ornaments which the coffins contain, and break hundreds every year for the purpose of rifling them. In searching for this purpose, they drive their spears as far as possible into the light soil. If the spear-head chance to

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strike against any impediment, the wild fellow sounds to ascertain if it be a coffin or a vault, and by the vibration produced he knows whether he has gained his object. The spear is then thrown aside, and he begins to work with his arms and hands like a mole. If an obstacle—a brick for instance—present itself, recourse is had to the spear point, which acts the part of lever and pickaxe. In this manner he successively grubs and picks until his perseverance has succeeded in clearing away the soil from the upper part of the coffin. The spear again does its duty in deliberately breaking into the tenement of the dead, and the Arab carefully turns over the frail relics of humanity with his dagger, until he secures his spoil. As soon as this sacrilegious process is concluded, he breaks a hole through the bottom of the coffin to ascertain if there be another immediately below, and if so, to repeat his former labours. By this process the whole surface of the mounds is covered with innumerable holes and broken pottery, which at first render either walking or riding a matter of perplexity and danger.

The object of my second journey to Warka was to endeavour to obtain a specimen of these extraordinary coffins, in order that it might be forwarded to the British Museum. In this, however, I experienced much more difficulty than was anticipated. In digging trenches, I ascertained that those near the surface were considerably weathered, while those below were saturated with moisture, and frequently crushed by the superincumbent weight. They invariably fell to pieces in the attempt to stir them. Sometimes the contents were removed, and at other times the earth, which had accumulated inside through crevices, was wholly allowed to remain, or was partially cleared out; pieces of carpet and abbas were tied round, and poles placed below them to give support; but all to no purpose. After

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several days of anxious labour, and the demolition of perhaps a hundred coffins, I almost despaired of success.

The Arabs were anxious that I should be pleased, and were as annoyed as myself at our fruitless endeavours. At last the good-natured Gunza took hold of my sleeve, and addressed me on behalf of his fellows :—"Oh, Beg! you take much trouble to get one of these pots of the old Kaffirs—may they be cursed!—and have brought with you spades and shovels from a great distance for this purpose. Our hands were not made to use such implements, which are the tools of the Felláh, not of the Mádán; but with the spear we can do many things. Give us your permission, Beg, and we will follow our own mode of search, and, inshallah! we shall soon be able to find plenty of pots, among which there will certainly be one strong and good enough to carry away." As there was no doubt of their being more adept with their hands and spears than the ordinary implements of civilized life, I acceded to their request, and despatched a party to hunt after their own method. They kept their promise, and I soon had the satisfaction of seeing several good coffins uncovered in different parts of the ruins. But still there occurred the same difficulty of removal; several more being broken in the vain attempt.

At length it occurred to me that, with some strong paper, an expedient might be adopted to strengthen them. As a last resource, I determined to send and endeavour to procure some at Semáva, twenty miles distant. An Arab was dismissed with a few shámies* to make the purchase, and on the third day again made his appearance with all the stock of strong paper which the town, as good luck would have it, could provide. A coffin having been selected on the following afternoon, wood, flour, and water were brought up to the mound, a fire

* The shámí is an Arab coin, equal to about twentypence of our money.

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lighted, and paste made on the spot. The surface of the coffin was then carefully cleaned, inside and out, and several thick layers of paper applied. It was left exposed all night, so that, before morning, the paper had become like hard pasteboard. The Arabs were delighted; they danced, laughed, sang, and clapped their hands, tapped the paper with their knuckles, and patronisingly patted my back. They wanted at once to shoulder it and be off, but I deferred the removal until late in the afternoon, in order that the paper might be thoroughly dried. In the interim, as much earth as was deemed safe was removed from below, and two strong tent-poles placed beneath. By means of these the coffin was lifted upon a board, covered with workmen's abbas, and carefully secured with ropes. Spears and spades were then made into strong fasces and attached to the under side of the board, for handles by which to carry the burden to the banks of the Euphrates. It was exceedingly heavy, and required a strong party of Arabs to relieve each other. The ground was, in many parts, excessively rough and difficult to traverse in approaching the river, on account of the numerous channels, so that I was in constant trepidation lest a trip or false step might destroy all the fruits of our labour. This anxiety on my part was not without cause, for the wild fellows, notwithstanding the weight of their burden, could not be restrained from joining in the dance and song, with which their comrades off duty enlivened the whole route. Their excitement had been roused to the highest pitch, and their gestures surpassed anything they had ever yet exhibited before me. The coffin was frequently in danger when the whole party at times feigned a hostile charge against the bearers, and the latter, unable to restrain their natural impetuosity, wielded their spears, which they insisted on carrying, and yelled defiance in

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return. The more I entreated, the more riotous they became, until I discovered that the best plan was to let them have their own way, and wear themselves out.

In this manner we traversed the nine miles between the ruins and the river, and arrived within sight of the camp, when the excitement became greater than ever. The women, in their eagerness to see the unwonted sight—unwonted indeed, because probably upwards of two thousand years had passed since such a coffin had been conveyed in similar manner—even forgot to hide their faces, and came out in a body to meet the procession, uttering their wild táhlehl and plaintive wail, while they pretended to throw dust upon their hair, in imitation of the ceremony of mourning for the dead. The men, under the influence of this additional impulse, redoubled their exertions, until they resembled frantic demons rather than human beings.* I was not sorry when the primitive bier and its precious burden were safely deposited at our tents. Each bearer then received some little present for his extra labour, and retired to the sheikh's tent to discuss the great event of the day. In remembrance of it, and of my stay among them, that encampment was henceforward to be known by the name of "Beit-el-Ghyáwr," "the Infidel's House," a somewhat doubtful honour, it must be confessed, towards myself.

The papering process succeeded to the best of my expectation, and, in the course of a few days, the three coffins were safely secured, which are now in the British Museum.

Within the coffins the skeletons are frequently to be observed, having the arms bent across the body; but they usually fell to powder on exposure to the air. In one instance, I noticed the remnants of a light-coloured garment, of fine texture, adhering to the bones.

Many small objects are associated with the coffins,

* See Frontispiece.

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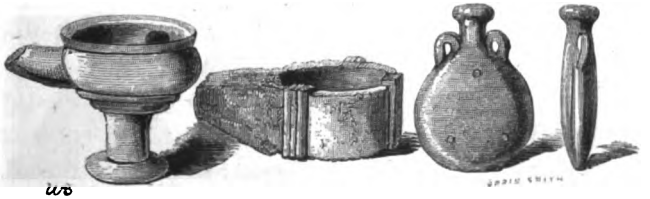
either in the inside, or around them in the earth or vault. The personal relics of the deceased consist of gold and silver finger-rings; armlets, bangles and toe-rings of silver, brass, and copper; bead-necklaces, and small cylinders. Gold ornaments are not uncommon, such as ear-rings, and small plates or beads for fillets, of

Gold Ornaments.

tasteful and elegant design. Thin gold leaf sometimes appears to have covered the face like a veil; and one or two broad ribbons of thin gold not unfrequently occur on each side of the head. Large pointed head-dresses, Budda told me, had been found and sold to the perambulating Jews, who visit the Mádán periodically for the purpose of purchasing the gold. It is seldom that these ornaments are sold in their original state, because the Arabs melt them down for the convenience of secreting them. Hence it is that so few are offered for sale in the bazaars of Bághdád—the great mart for antiques.

With the above are articles of a different description, such as small earthen drinking vessels and lamps, glass



Lamps and Lachrymatories.

lachrymatories, copper bowls, hideous bone figures probably dolls, and a variety of others.

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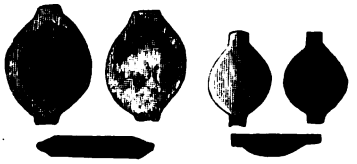
The top of the coffin is often a receptacle for small relics—apparently the parting gifts of friends—as the following list will shew:—Seven different forms of fragile, coloured glass bottles, two curiously formed yellow glass dishes, a glazed terra-cotta lamp (a constant accompaniment), four bone stilettos, two iron implements, the bones of a small bird, fragments of a bunch of flowers, and an ornamental reed basket (the plaits of the reeds being quite distinct) containing two pieces of kohl or black paint for the eyelids, and a tassel bead. Judging from their character, these articles appear to have been the property of a female.

Terra-Cotta Lamp.

Strewed in the earth around the coffins are numerous copper coins, the only articles which afford any positive clue to their age. These are moulded, flat on one side, and slightly rounded on the other, the edges having two little projecting processes opposite to each other. The types are extremely indistinct, but no doubt is entertained of their



Parthian Coins.

Jar and Jugs from the Coffin Mounds.

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being Parthian. Close to the foot of each coffin are one or more large glazed water-jugs and earthen drinking cups, of extremely artistic form. One of these, the tall central jug of the engraving, was found in a recess built for its reception in the side wall of a vault, within arm's length of the coffin. The bones of a fowl, with flint* and steel, were also frequently deposited upon the lid. The practice of placing food and water near the body was certainly connected with the superstitions of the period. The same practice is, I believe, continued among the Arabs, who conceive that these articles are necessary to give the spirit strength on its long journey.

Steel and Flint.

Some of the most interesting objects found in the same position are small terra-cotta figures, which were probably household divinities. Many are undoubtedly Parthian; such, for instance, as the reclining warrior, with a cup (?) in his left hand, wearing a coat-of-mail or padded tunic reaching to the knees, and a helmet ornamented in front. The whole costume is well represented on many coins of the Parthian epoch.

Reclining Figure of Parthian Warrior.

Several are female figures in loose attire, exhibiting strange head-dresses, which, doubtless, give us some notion of the costume of the period. One of these is very remarkable; it rises into two tall conical peaks, from which depends a veil, reminding one strongly of the English

* Slices of flint and obsidian, precisely like the sacrificial knives of the ancient Mexicans, are found upon the mounds. The former were designed for striking a light, but the object of the latter is not so evident.

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ladies' costume in the time of Henry IV. Nude female figures, probably representing the Mylitta or Venus of

Terra-cotta Figures. Parthian?

the Assyrians, were extremely common at the Parthian period, having been handed down from antiquity. Similar figures are universal throughout the East before the Christian era. A few figures bear traces of colour. The accompanying figures represent an old bearded man and an old woman carrying a square basket or box in her hand; red and black paint are distinctly recognisable upon them.

Clay Figures exhibiting traces of paint.

Of all the clay figures, the heads in the adjoining woodcut are most interesting. They are infinitely superior to the rest in point of design and execution, and mark the rapidly spreading influence of Greek art. They possess all the characteristic features and boldness of the Greek face, and yet they can scarcely be other than the works of Babylonian artists. The hair is arranged in long ringlets, and the heads are

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surmounted by lofty head-dresses of different form. To the same period may be referred a small broken tablet, representing a sturdy winged figure, with a robe fastened by a brooch at the right shoulder, but flying loosely, and leaving the body naked. The head is wanting; the legs with anklets stand on small rounded prominences; one is held in his left hand. This figure is probably a representation of Hercules.

Greek Heads.

It would be endless to give in detail all the small articles which were discovered in connexion with the slipper coffins.

It is not to be supposed that my Arab friends patiently submitted to my appropriating the small articles which were revealed during the researches among the ruins. On the discovery of an urn or coffin, it was with the greatest difficulty they could be prevented from at once breaking in and stealing the valuables, before the earth was sufficiently removed from around it, to admit of my making a careful examination. They would then all cluster together, thrust themselves in my way, and shew the greatest eagerness to seize a share of the spoil; it was sometimes almost impossible to move for them. When I drew any object out of a coffin, a general commotion took place, and a variety of exclamations were uttered; the words "gold," "a cylinder," "silver," "sherbeh," "beads," rang through the assembly like wildfire, and it required every possible manœuvre to keep their hands out of the sarcophagus. Old Budda generally succeeded in obtaining the best place, his little eyes sparkling with avarice, and his long arms stretched

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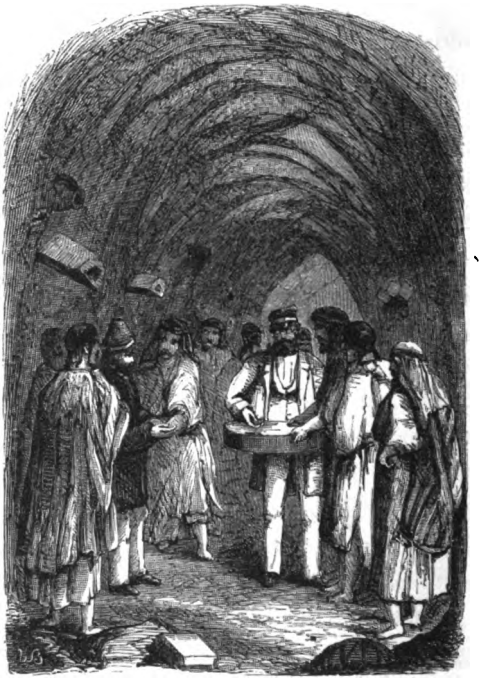
out, while he volunteered information to those who could not see so well as himself, his finger-ends itching all the while to take advantage of any opportunity when they might intrude themselves into the proceedings. It was useless to drive them away; like flies or vultures, they would return immediately to their prey.

It frequently happened that, no sooner was a coffin discovered, than it was rifled without ceremony in my absence, and, of course, no person was the offender. To dismiss a workman by way of example was superfluous, because his next neighbour would repeat the offence on the first opportunity. They were perfectly incorrigible in this respect.



Coffin Trench.

A vault was once discovered in a trench, when a fearful hurricane of sand drove us all from the mound; it was impossible to work, and almost to breathe. Fearing some of the Arabs might return and plunder the contents, I deputed old Budda and two others to remain and to keep watch awhile behind the rest. On the following morning, notwithstanding this precaution, the vault was found to be broken into, and the coffin rifled. Being

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much annoyed, I resolved, if possible, to ascertain who were the aggressors. Open and secret questioning were of no avail—all strenuously denied the theft—so another plan was adopted to discover the guilty party.

It was proposed that each man should take an oath upon the Korán that he was innocent of the offence. Ovannes, therefore, seated himself as judge on a hen-coop, and the Arabs, in their tribes, filed off before him, kissing, as they passed, a French Dictionary, which answered the part of a Korán, and declaring that they knew nothing of the act committed. The whole of the 'Abbás and Khithr tribes went through the ceremony without flinching, but, when it came to the turn of the Tuweyba, they begged for an hour's consideration, and, at the expiration of that time, asked to be permitted to visit El-Khithr and consult the bones of the holy Imám on the subject. Finding this subterfuge without effect, at daybreak the following day, Azayiz appeared with a handful of various beads which, it is to be charitably presumed, were the whole of the stolen property. As an act of great liberality on my part, they were returned to him, with an injunction that he would strictly look after the honesty of his people. I never overcame the belief that Budda and his companions (unable to resist the opportunity of being left alone on the mounds with an unsearched coffin before them) were the delinquents, and that his influence over the tribe prevented their denouncing him. He was very humble next day, and often repeated his regrets that the Tuweyba tribe had so committed itself.

Considering the friable nature of the soil in the coffin trenches, it is wonderful that no very serious accidents took place during the continuance of the excavations. One mishap, however, occurred, in consequence of the proximity of an old Arab working, and afforded an in-

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stance of Arab endurance of pain, and the rapidity with which their wounds heal. The trench side gave way and buried three men, one of whom was dug out with his collar bone broken. The poor fellow walked back to camp, where I managed to set the bone. While engaged in this occupation in the presence of the whole assembled tribe in the sheikh's tent, one of the persecuting dust squalls arose, and in a few seconds we were enveloped in a flood of dense sand, the light of the setting sun was completely shut out, and a yellow, sickly colour pervaded the atmosphere. The force with which the particles of sand were driven produced a sharp tingling of the flesh, and obliged the half-naked Arabs for once to cover themselves with their abbas, in which they sat crouching until the tent was blown down about our ears, and there was a chance of our being either strangled or suffocated. They then all sprang to their feet, and re-erected the tent under the excitement of the war-cry of the men and the táhlehl of the women. The patient, during the scramble which ensued, had the bone put out of position, and suffered great agony from the roughness of his comrades. As soon as the hurricane was over, it was set a second time and bandaged up, but in the night it got once mere disconnected. He, however, insisted on returning to his family across the Euphrates, notwithstanding all my persuasion. On receipt of a week's wages, he set out on foot upon a two days' journey! The endurance of an Arab is astonishing. Within a month after the occurrence of the accident, the man presented himself again and demanded to be employed once more, swinging his arm round to shew that it was healed. His request was granted for light work, and he afterwards obtained me several valuable relics.

In this place I may enumerate the few objects which

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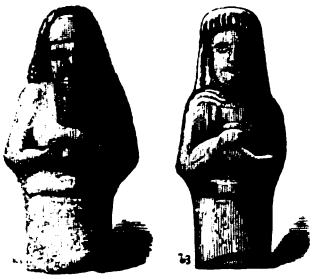
undoubtedly belong to the earliest type of funereal remains :—

1. The edifice of terra-cotta cones, of which I have already given an account (p. 187); and the horns of the same substance, with the dedication of Belus, as ascertained by Sir Henry Rawlinson.

2. Several dark brown tablets or syllabaria of unbaked clay, measuring nine inches by seven, and inscribed with columns of minute cuneiform characters ;—one of which contains the names of various trees.

3. Terra-cotta figures of Venus ; an old man with flowing beard, wearing a skull-cap and long robe, encircled round the waist by a belt, his hands clasped in front in the Oriental attitude of respect ; and a younger personage, holding some unknown object, probably a mace, in the hands. These figures are infinitely superior to those of the later periods. Although stiff in outline, they are very correctly modelled, and may be known at once by the dark green clay of which they are composed.



Babylonian Figures.

4. Near two well-built brick vaults, cemented with plaster, at the base of a small mound * south-east of the Buwáríyya, was dug up a rude jar, containing a thin silver plate, which was folded in linen. It measures two inches long by one inch wide, and is embossed with a beautiful female figure. The hands are raised in an attitude of adoration, and the hair hangs loosely behind. The attitude and costume recall to mind the extraordinary figures on the rock sculptures of Mal Amír plain, in the Bakhtiyárí Mountains in Persia.

* At G on the Plan.

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All the above objects occur at the outskirts of the great coffin mounds, where, if accumulated in the way I have been led to suppose, it is natural we should find the primitive relics. If it were possible to penetrate through the vast piles of more recent deposits, we should doubtless obtain some very valuable information regarding the very earliest modes of burial.

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CHAPTER XIX.

Bank-notes of Babylon—Relics Injured by Fire—A Fruitful Mound—Chamber containing Architectural Ornaments—Origin of the Saracenic Style—Clay Tablets with Seal Impressions and Greek Names—Continuance of Cuneiform until B.C. 200—Himyaric Tomb-stone—Conical Mounds—Style for Writing Cuneiform—The Shat-el-Nîl—General Results of the Excavations at Warka—Probable Relics still Buried there.

WHILE rambling over the mounds one day, I accidentally observed two bricks projecting through the soil of the wall or terrace which constitutes the edge of the great platform on the east of the Buwáríyya.* Thinking, from their vitrified aspect, that they were likely to bear cuneiform legends, I extracted them from the earth, and, in doing so, exposed two small tablets of unbaked clay, covered on both sides with minute characters. On searching further, others were discovered, and eventually there were obtained forty, more or less perfect, varying from two to four-and-a-half inches in length, by one to three inches in breadth. Many others were either irrevocably damaged by weather, or unavoidably broken in extraction from the tenacious clay in which they were disposed in rows and imbedded upon a brick pavement. They are now in the British Museum, but it is feared that the nitrous earth of which they are composed will cause them to decay rapidly on exposure to the atmosphere.

Sir Henry Rawlinson reported concerning them :—

* At O on the Plan.

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"that they are certainly official documents issued by order of the king, attested or indorsed by the principal officers of state, and referring to specific amounts in weight of gold or silver. He could not help suspecting that the Babylonian kings, in an age when coined money was unknown, used these pieces of baked clay for the mere purpose of a circulating medium. The smaller cakes, he thought, corresponded to the notes of hand of the present day, the tenor of the legend being apparently an acknowledgment of liability by private parties for certain amounts of gold and silver. The more formal documents, however, seemed to be notes issued by the Government, for the convenience of circulation, representing a certain value, which was always expressed in measures of weight, of gold or silver, and redeemable on presentation at the Royal Treasury. He had chiefly examined them with the view to historical discovery, and had succeeded in finding the names of Nabopollassar, Nabokodrossor, Nabonidus, Cyrus, and Cambyses (ranging from 626 to 522 B.C.) ; the precise day of issue in such a month of such a year of the king's reign being in each instance attached to the document."*

These tablets were, in point of fact, the equivalents of our own bank-notes, and prove that a system of artificial currency prevailed in Babylonia, and also in Persia, at an unprecedented early age—centuries before the introduction of paper or printing! They were, undoubtedly, deposited in the position where they were discovered, about the commencement of the Achæmenian period.

On removing the rubbish from the brick pavement, it appeared that it formed a terrace thirty-two feet long and four feet wide. Only one brick was inscribed, and that had evidently been taken from some edifice built by Urukh, most probably from the Buwáríyya. Behind was

* See "The Athenæum" for March 15, 1851.

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the base of a wall of unbaked bricks ten or twelve feet thick; the whole being covered with two feet of rubbish and charcoal. Upon the terrace were several highly interesting articles damaged by fire, among them may be mentioned :—

1. Fragment of an alabaster cone, apparently portion of a grotesque head for a mace or staff. It is engraved with scrolls, and has upon it a few Assyrian characters.

2. Part of the hinge and valve of a bivalve shell (Tridacna squamosa). On the exterior are delicately traced the heads, necks, and fore legs of two horses drawing a chariot, and covered with trappings and armour (?). The reins are fastened to semicircular processes behind the ears, like those on the sculptures of Sennacherib from Nineveh. Full-blown and budding flowers of the lotus are introduced on every available space, extending over the hinge to the opposite side of the shell, which is carved with an ornamental basket filled with the same flowers.*

3. A carved ivory panel, four inches long, in a state of rapid decomposition.

4. Two large mushroom-shaped pieces of baked clay, covered on their flat tops and stems with cuneiform records.

5. A brick with stamp in relief of a circular-topped altar on a pedestal, surmounted by a seven-rayed sun.

Stamp on Bricks.

Beyond the spot where the tablets and the above articles occurred, I discovered indications of another method of burial. My attention was directed to two bricks resting angle-wise against two others placed horizontally. Below the shelter so formed were three more tablets,

* A woodcut of this shell is given at p. 563 of Mr Layard's "Nineveh and Babylon," where also the author alludes to a similar engraved shell from an Etruscan tomb in the British Museum.

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lying on a huge brick, seventeen inches square, with a hole through its centre. It covered a well-built vault, measuring thirteen inches by ten inches square, and twenty-one inches in depth, which was filled with earth and the fragments of two large sepulchral vases, without any traces of their original contents. At the left corner of the vault, towards the edge of the pavement, was a small square hole in which lay a broken dish or jar. Behind the four bricks on the surface of the vault, was a broken vase, containing reed ashes and burned bones reduced to small lumps, and crumbling to powder.

At a short distance from this first vault was a second, in every important respect resembling the other. Within the small hole at the angle were broken pottery, burned reeds, date-stones, and part of a lamb's jaw.

From subsequent discoveries at Sinkara, I conclude that the bones of the dead were, in the above cases, deposited in vases and placed in the vaults, after which the private records and property of the deceased were arranged over them, and the whole submitted to the flames.

In a neighbouring terrace, two similar vaults to those described were discovered. This terrace measured forty feet long by four feet wide, and was paved with bricks inscribed in slightly relieved cuneiform characters of Cambyses the brother of Cyrus, a personage of whom we possess no historical notice whatever.* A few unimportant articles lay on the surface of the pavement.

* In a short notice of my discoveries, at p. 377 of "Nineveh and its Palaces," I observe the following passage: "At one place, Senkereh, he had come on a pavement, extending from half-an-acre to an acre, entirely covered with writing, which was engraved upon baked tiles," &c. As the unimportant pavement described in the text is the only one I was so fortunate to discover, either at Sinkara or Warka, it is difficult to conceive how such an error should have crept into the passage quoted. It is to be regretted that, in a work intended to be a *resumé* of Assyrian and Babylonian

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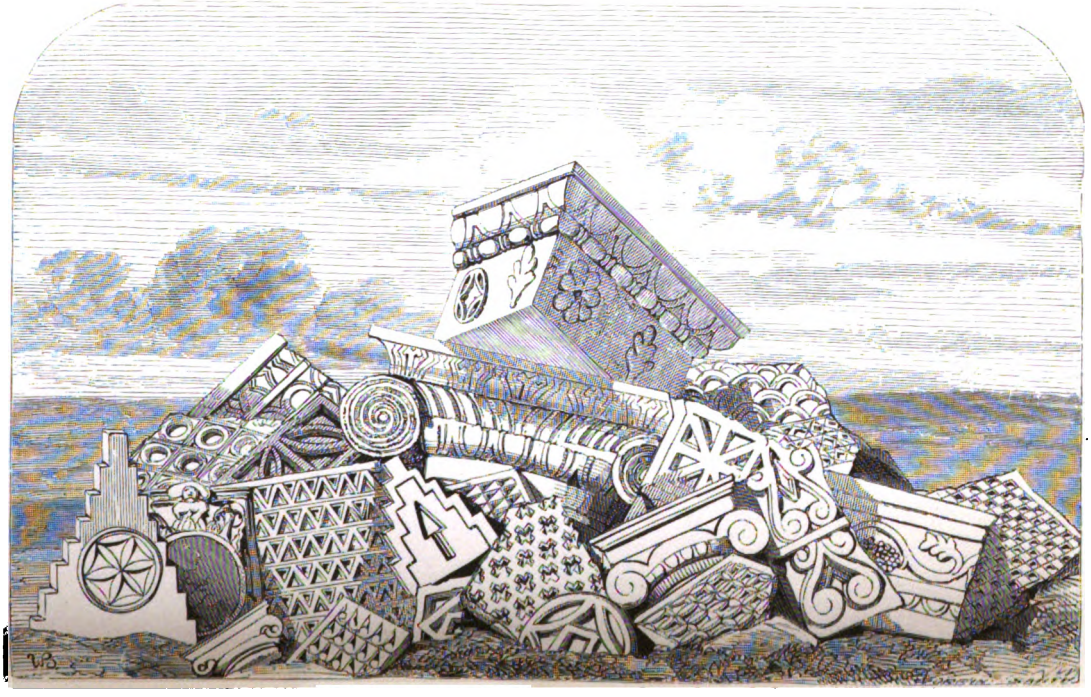

Architectural Fragments from a Parthian Edifice at Warka.

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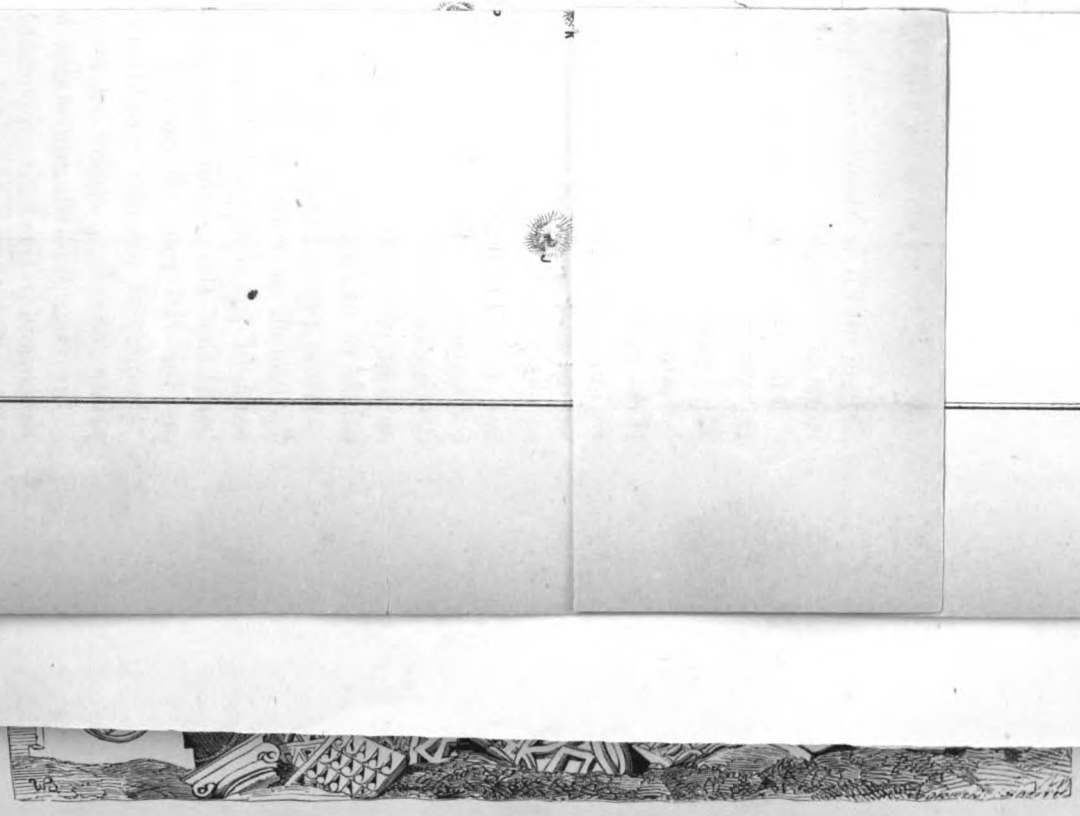

Architectural Fragments from a Parthian Edifice at Warka.

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The locality at Warka, which furnished the most aluable and interesting fruits of my researches, was small detached mound,* forty feet high, situated about alf-a-mile south-east of the Buwáríyya. One of my verseers picked up from its summit a few fragments of rnamental plaster, which induced me to make excaations. I was soon rewarded by the discovery of a hamber, measuring forty feet long and twenty-eight eet wide, the mud walls of which stood only four feet igh, and had been covered with coloured plaster. It vas a perfect museum of architectural scraps, of a highly nstructive and curious character. The unbaked brick loor was literally piled with broken columns, capitals, ornices, and innumerable relics of rich internal decoration, which exhibited undoubted symptoms of Greek and Roman influence on Oriental taste. The smaller objects were wholly plaster; but the larger consisted of moulded bricks, thinly coated with white plaster; many of them were fantastically coloured. One large fragment of cornice bore, among other devices, a spirited crouching griffin, which, at first sight, reminded me of the similar figures sculptured on a frieze in an inner chamber at the remarkable ruins of Al Hádhr, near Mosul.† This emblem was accompanied by the well-

discovery, greater care had not been taken to prevent the insertion of this and many more grievous errors.

Cuneiform inscriptions in relief are not of very frequent occurrence in Babylonia. Besides the instance above mentioned, Mr Taylor discovered this variety of legend on small bricks of very early date from the coffin mounds of Múgeyer. I afterwards exhumed bricks with a Pehleví inscription in relief from the mounds of Khán-í-Kyáya near Bághdád, and at Jidr in central Chaldæa. It is not improbable that the style was re-introduced into Mesopotamia by Cambyses on returning from his conquest of Egypt, where relief inscriptions commonly occur.

* At G on the plan. This mound yielded two of the three coffins in the British Museum.

† See a sketch of this frieze, accompanying Mr Ainsworth's Memoir in the "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. xi.

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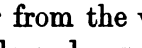
known Greek echinus moulding; but the cornice was purposely destroyed by some strange Arabs, who visited the mounds between the intervals of excavation.

Three of the capitals are Ionic; but the proportions of the volutes and other members are peculiar. A fourth description of small capital has peculiarities of its own, suggestive of the later Byzantine style. A large and elegant leaf rises from the necking, and bends under each corner of the abacus. Springing from behind a smaller curled leaf in the centre is the bust of a human figure, wearing the same preposterous head-dress which is characteristic of the slipper coffins and Parthian coins.

No columns were discovered to correspond with the larger capitals; but the walls were liberally adorned with small Ionic half-columns, with half-smooth, half-fluted shafts, which were highly coloured. The lower and smooth surfaces were diagonally striped with red, green, yellow, and black; the flutes being painted black, red, and yellow alternately, while the level ridges between them are left white. In some cases the flutes were quartered with the same colours.

Among the debris of smaller articles were bases of columns,—friezes, with bunches of grapes alternating with leaves,—gradines, resembling those on the castles of the Nineveh bas-reliefs, but ornamented at the base with a conspicuous six-rayed star in a circle,—fragments of open screen-work, with complicated geometric designs of different patterns on the opposite sides (these are very peculiar, and differ materially from the arabesque),—and flakes of painted plaster from the walls, with fragments of small statuettes, coloured, and sometimes gilded. Scratched upon the edge of one object were the characters  which approach nearer to the Himyaric character than any with which I am acquainted.

With regard to the age of this building, so elaborately

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ornamented, I was for some time in doubt. The enormous head-dress of the capital, being equally characteristic of both the Parthian and Sassanian periods, affords no evidence on the subject; but, as the ruins abound with coins of the former dynasty, while none of the latter have been found, it is but reasonable to conclude that the edifice is rather Parthian than Sassanian; and, therefore, on mature consideration, I assume that it dates about the Christian era. While the Roman griffin, and the incongruities with pure Greek architecture observable in the capitals, are evidences of a past age and style, —the complicated design of the screen-work, with its geometric curves and tracery, seems to shadow forth the beauty and richness of a style which afterwards followed the tide of Mohammedan conquest to the remotest corners of the known world.

It has long been a disputed question whence originated the germs of Saracenic architecture; but the prevalent opinion is that the Moslems, having no style of their own, adopted those which they found practised in the countries whither they carried their conquests, more especially the Byzantine. It is, nevertheless, remarkable, that the same uniformity in richly-wrought tracery and geometric ornamentation prevails from India to Spain in Saracenic structures, which could only have arisen from a central point. We know that in the days of Hárúnu-'r-Réshíd the city of Bághdád, far removed from the influence of Byzantine art, had attained a high pitch of civilization and splendour, and that her public edifices, within little more than a century after the rise of Islamism, were adorned with a richness and an attention to minute Saracenic details, which could scarcely have arrived at perfection in so short a period. We know, too, that Kúfa, at the commencement of Mohammedan dominion, was equally celebrated for its architectural beauties.

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May we not suppose that the peculiarities of Saracenic architecture are due to a much earlier period, and that they originated with the Parthians, who succeeded the Greeks in the possession of Mesopotamia? Of this race we have, unfortunately, scarcely any memorials left.* They are described, in their wars with the Romans, as barbarians, celebrated for their skill in horsemanship and shooting with the arrow, and for the richness of their armour. Of their arts we know nothing; but surely they could not have been without some appreciation of the beautiful, inhabiting, as they did, the cities and fortresses adorned by the Greeks and Romans, with which great nations they passed five hundred years in conflict. It may be that the Parthians were the inventors of the Saracenic style, but that the Sassanians—their rivals and successors in power—suppressed the influence which they had exercised, and which again shewed itself, after the Mahommedan conquest of those countries, in the application of Parthian ornament to Moslem buildings. This may possibly be esteemed a far-fetched hypothesis; but I can see no other mode of accounting for the advanced state of the arts under the Khálíf Hárúnu-'r-Réshíd, so entirely different from that practised under the Sassanians. At any rate, we have at Warka an edifice, with an approximation to Byzantine and Saracenic forms, due to a period long anterior to their introduction elsewhere, which edifice was, I firmly believe, erected during the Parthian ascendency.

That it was Parthian, I, moreover, infer from the discovery of a slipper-coffin, and the usual embossed figures with the preposterous head-gear, at the depth of six feet below the floor, within the chamber. On digging deeply

* It is true that the legends on Parthian coins are written in Greek, but we know little further concerning them, or of their own written language.

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into the mound, for the purpose of ascertaining if it, like the great platform, were composed of coffins, it proved to be constructed of solid earth, around and upon which were coffins; those on the summit not extending below the depth of a few feet.* The chamber was probably a tomb erected over the coffin. There were apparently other chambers in the same vicinity which contained similar relics, but I had no opportunity of excavating among them.

Within twenty paces of the above chamber, and three feet below its level, was made one of the most curious, if not the most valuable, discoveries at Warka. In several cases, it was noticed that clay tablets, with cuneiform records, were associated with the ashes of burnt wood; I therefore paid particular attention to the nature of the soil composing the mounds. While riding up to the workmen engaged at the Parthian edifice, my horse's feet turned up a quantity of black earth, which induced me to dismount, and examine it more closely. My trouble was repaid by the discovery of a fragment of baked clay tablet. A small party of Arabs were directed to the spot, and, in the course of a few hours, their labours were rewarded by finding, close under the surface, eight tablets of light-coloured clay. They were lying on decayed straw matting, which was imbedded in bitumen, and surrounded on all sides with charred date-wood and ashes. They differ from any hitherto discovered, in being fully an inch in thickness, and in having round their broad edges the impressions of seals, above each of which are the characters, "the seal of;" and below, the name of the party to the deed. Many are extremely beautiful, and shew the perfection attained in the art of gem engraving, in Babylonia, at that early period. It

* Two of the coffins in the British Museum were dug up from this mound, where they proved to be in better condition than elsewhere.

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is true that we possess numberless cylinders with figures of a much more ancient date, but they are of ruder workmanship, and of a totally different character—by no means to be compared with the impressions upon the tablets, which evince a great advance in art, assigning them to a later period. The inscriptions, which cover both sides of the tablets, are so minute and delicate, as to require the aid of a microscope to decipher them with precision.

These tablets and seal impressions are so curious and interesting, that a detailed account of them may prove acceptable :*—

Tablet No. 1.—Twelve oval seals, some elongated and pointed. The central ones at top and bottom are the largest and most important. One of these is an indistinct representation of the winged deity—the Hormuzd of the Persian sculptures,—in front of whom is a well-defined isosceles triangle, precisely resembling the stamp upon the bricks at Wuswas, and at the other larger but unexplored ruin at Warka.† On the same edge is an impression of a fine Socrates-like head. The large central seal on the opposite edge is a very beautiful face, with Greek expression, beardless, and resembling the profile of Alexander the Great. Next to this impression is one of a male and female figure conversing at the base of a graceful voluted capital. Another exhibits a Greek head, with helmet and plume. The other impressions are very indistinct. Size, four and a-half inches by four inches.

Tablet No. 2 has one corner broken off. It originally had twenty or twenty-one impressions, among which are several sphynxes. One is exceedingly spirited, with a

* I am sorry to observe that, since their arrival in England, the exudation of saline efflorescences has much damaged these remarkable objects, and there seems every prospect of their being completely obliterated, unless means are discovered to preserve them.

† At B and C of the General Plan.

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four-turretted crown surmounting the head. Several others are damaged. Size, four-and-a-half inches by three-and-a-half inches.

Tablet No. 3 bears eighteen impressions, some of which are remarkably beautiful, in excellent preservation, and highly spirited. They comprise:—1. A roaring lion—moon and star. 2. A wild ass trotting—crescent above. 3. Winged sagittarius—crescent in front. 4. Winged griffin with a single horn, the profile resembling that on the rock tombs at Persepolis. 5. A horse. 6. A winged griffin and crescent. 7. Nude figure. 8. Goat—crescent above, star in front. 9. Winged bull and crescent—triangle below. 10. Human-headed bull. 11. Dressed figure. 12. Winged human-headed animal. 13. Lion holding crescent—star above. 14. Fish-god. 15. Human figure. 16. Dog—triangle above. The other impressions are less distinct. Size, four-and-a-half inches by four inches.

Tablet No. 4 has only a few impressions remaining distinct:—1. is the most beautiful and perfect of the whole series. It represents the fish-god Ovannes (?) with goat's head and fore-legs, and fish-body and tail, in front is a star—behind hovers an eagle with outstretched wings, probably intended for Hormuzd.* 2. Two figures, representing the Dioscuri or twins. 3. Human-headed winged bull. 4. Human figure. 5. Dog. (?) 6. Winged unicorn.

Tablet No. 5. The only impression very distinct is that of a Babylonian figure in profile, in a long robe, with a staff in one hand.

The impressions on the three remaining tablets are more or less damaged by the efflorescence of nitrous and other salts, which is contained in the clay composing

* The cuneiform signature beneath this impression reads Savastana, equivalent to the Greek Σεβαστος and Latin Augustus.

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these, and in fact all articles of similar description from Warka.

In examining these tablets there is one point which cannot fail to be remarked—the frequent repetition of the heavenly bodies and zodiacal signs. They seem to imply some connexion with Chaldæan worship, and this impression is to a certain extent confirmed by Sir Henry Rawlinson's inspection of the inscriptions upon the tablets. He observes that the matter relates entirely to the domestic economy of the temples. The most extraordinary circumstance, however, connected with them is the recognition of Greek names, in Babylonian characters, beneath many of the seals, and the dates in various years of the reigns of Seleucus and Antiochus the Great upon the subject matter of the records. They are therefore the latest documents of the cuneiform period extant, and afford undoubted proof that cuneiform writing was still in current use as late as about B.C. 200. Previous to this discovery the most recent records of the style with which we were acquainted were the Persian inscriptions of Artaxerxes Ochus on the northern face of the platform and on the western staircase at Persepolis, and that upon the porphyry vase,* preserved in the treasury of St Mark's at Venice, and ascribed to the same monarch, about 350 B.C.

This discovery is the more important because it raises a hope that some cuneiform records of the intervening one hundred and fifty years between Artaxerxes Ochus and

* It has been inferred from the orthographical corruption of the king's name in this instance, that the language had lost its purity towards the close of the Achæmenian period, and therefore that the inscription upon the vase must be that of Artaxerxes Ochus. It is not, however, improbable that the Artaxerxes in question is Artaxerxes Mnemon, as, during my excavations at Susa, inscriptions of this king were discovered, exhibiting similar errors in grammatical construction, and implying an earlier decline in the Persic tongue.

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Antiochus the Great may yet cast up, and that an era so prolific in great events may prove to have possessed its Babylonian as well as its Greek historians. What valuable information might we not derive from a cuneiform memorial of Alexander's campaigns, or from a cuneiform record accompanied with its equivalent in Greek, which might set at rest the prevailing doubts concerning the true interpretation of the arrow-headed character! Warka has already yielded many interesting and valuable treasures from its mounds, and may yet furnish the above desideratum. With the exception of Susa, I know of no ruins more likely to do so.

At the foot of the mound where the plaster ornaments and Seleucide tablets occurred, my servant was one day giving some instructions to the workmen, when the ground under his horse's feet suddenly gave way, and precipitated them into a vaulted tomb without coffin or other relics. It measured seven-and-a-half feet long, and four feet wide, and had been already plundered by the Arabs. At one extremity was an entrance two feet wide, partially closed by a rough limestone slab, measuring two feet by one foot and-a-half and four inches thick. The slab was found standing on end, with the accompanying imperfect Himyaric inscription, facing inwards, and recording the death of Hanat-asar, son of Esau, son of Hanat-asar. Who this person was, or the date at which this grave-stone was erected to his memory, it is quite impossible to say.

Himyaric tomb-stone.

The record is, however, of considerable value and in-

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terest, inasmuch as it is the first inscription of the kind which has yet occurred in Mesopotamia, and tends to shew a connexion with southern Arabia, where the Himyaric language prevailed at an unknown early date, before the introduction of Kúfic and modern Arabic. The Himyaric language is supposed to be of Ethiopic derivation, and a relic of its existence in this region is interesting as connected with the Hamitic migration and origin of the ancient Chaldees, to which allusion has been previously made in these pages.*

In addition to the mounds and ruins thus far described, there is yet another class of remains which is deserving of notice, but concerning whose age we have little but analogy to guide us—I mean the conical mounds occurring both within and without the walls.

Of the former there are two. One, marked F on the plan, stands about two hundred and fifty feet from the north wall. Its height is forty-five feet, including fifteen feet of platform. The other is about eight hundred yards south-west from the former, and of much less importance. I dug trenches, from summit to base, completely through each, but without being rewarded by any discovery. They both were composed of unbaked brick.

At the distance of a mile beyond the most northerly point of the walls is a conspicuous and important mound of this description, which bears the name of Nuffayjí (J of the plan). Standing solitary in the desert, apart from the great mass of the main ruins, Nuffayjí is one of the most remarkable objects at Warka. In height it rivals the Buwáríyya—being ninety feet above the plain, with a circumference at its base of nine hundred and fifty feet. The steepness of its sides renders the ascent to the summit both difficult and dangerous. Its aspect is that of a huge bell, and appears to be composed of

* See page 96, *et seq.*

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solid loam and sand; but, having failed to make any discoveries in the smaller mounds of the same form, I declined to attack it.

The purpose for which such a pile outside the city was constructed it is difficult to understand, except it were for a watch-tower or a tomb. The Arabs have an idea that it was raised by a besieging army, but that, finding it too far distant from the walls for their designs, they raised a second mound about eight hundred yards from the north-east wall, indicated at M upon the plan, but inferior in size to Nuffayjí.

Between Nuffayjí and the walls are several small conical mounds, about twenty-five feet high, apparently, in some way or other, connected with the large mounds.

The only article obtained in any of these mounds is a small flat oval pebble, of dark green serpentine, cut and sharpened exactly after the fashion of the ancient Celtic hatchets found in the barrows of Europe. Similar objects are exhumed from other Babylonian ruins, but I scarcely think they were designed for the same use as that to which they were applied in far distant regions. My own impression is that it was not a celt, but rather a species of style for writing cuneiform inscriptions. When impressed upon soft clay or dough, it produces characters precisely similar to those on small clay tablets and cylinders, for which purpose it is admirably adapted. In the hand of a ready writer, it might be used with great rapidity and exactitude.

Conical mounds of similar description occur at widely different points from Persia to the Mediterranean, and are probably tumuli. Whether, however, they are to be ascribed to the ancient Scyths or to the Parthians of a later period, is yet a subject for the investigation of the curious. To whatever race they may be due, their presence at Warka is, however, quite in keeping with

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the sepulchral character of the place; and the bones of the warrior kings, in whose memory they were erected, may eventually be discovered, deeply buried in the centre, below the level of the desert.

Besides the conical mounds, there is a small square mound,* just outside the south-west wall, which deserves mention. It measures seventy-six paces by one hundred and ten, but its height does not exceed fourteen feet. Upon its surface is nearly every variety of inscribed brick, which occurs within the walls, and which, it is reasonable to conclude, were removed at a late period in the history of Warka to their present position. Among them are likewise several bricks of fine quality, cast in moulds for spiral columns and ornamental capitals of peculiar character. One brick bore in relief a star of twelve rays. None were *in situ*, but they all lay scattered about indiscriminately. Similar bricks were sparingly found within the ruins, and I observed others at the mound of El-Assám on the Shat-el-Káhr beyond Sinkara, and at Tel Usmer adjoining Akker Kúf near Bághdád. These are also probably of Parthian origin.

Brick capital.

Spiral column of moulded bricks.

Among the smaller relics obtained at Warka, a small tablet of serpentine is deserving of notice. Upon one side are four lines of Babylonian cuneiform, and upon the other a figure which appears to shew the origin of cuneiform characters from pictorial representation. The latter is, as every one knows, the most ancient method of expressing

Serpentine Tablet.

* N on Plan.

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natural objects, and it has been supposed by many that the cuneiform character, like the Egyptian hieroglyph, originated in simple ideography. By reference to the accompanying diagram it will be perceived that two lines crossed suppose the outline of the human figure, and that below one hand is a monogram, as if its cuneiform equivalent, the digits being expressed by five parallel strokes. What the other symbols are it is not easy to determine. I am not aware that this tablet has attracted the attention of cuneiform scholars, but the present opportunity is taken of laying it before them.

In describing the walls at the north-east of the ruins, I mentioned that they are between forty and fifty feet high, while on the opposite side they do not rise above the desert level. It was difficult to understand why there should be this difference in their elevation, until I ascertained the existence of the bed of an ancient river,* which, flowing from the north-north-west, was turned eastward by the height and thickness of the wall, and thus prevented from entering the city. I traced the channel for a considerable distance beyond the great pile of Nuffayjí, which mound it passes three hundred and fifty paces to the westward. It afterwards approaches within thirty paces of the small conical mound K. After touching on the north-east point of the walls, it passes round under them towards the east, where it divides into two branches, one of which holds its way in the direction of Sinkara, and the other continues its course southwards. Both branches are lost after proceeding a short distance further.

Near to Nuffayjí, the channel measured one hundred and twenty feet wide, and was elevated a few feet above the level of the desert, its banks on either side being about five feet high. That it was a trunk stream is evident

* Its course is represented on the Plan, by dotted lines.

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from the fact that it gave off numerous secondary canals towards the west, one of which was eighty feet broad.

At the point where it meets the walls, a sluice probably admitted a small supply through them into the city; but, if so, the channel is now drifted up with sand.

My great authority on the oral traditions of Warka—old Budda—remembered that this old channel was known to the fathers of the present generation of his tribe as an "ancient river," which they called the "Níl." He knew nothing of its origin or course, and the "Shat-el-Níl," farther north, was wholly unknown to him.

It has been eleswhere stated that, at the Arab conquest, there was an ancient branch of the Euphrates which flowed from Babylon in a south-east direction towards the city of Nílíyya, and joined the Tigris near the modern site of Kút-el-'Amára. This was called the "Níl," and gave off a large stream to Ziblíyya and Niffar which is, I believe, traceable further south, in the bed called the "Es-Sáhain," or "Shkain," and also in the Níl of Warka. At any rate, it is not a little remarkable that the same name for an "ancient river," not "a canal," should occur at two such distant points as Babylon and Warka.

The term "*Shat*-el-Níl" indicates its importance. It is, I believe, the only ancient artificial canal (Náhr) which has received the appellation of "Shat," or large river. As etymology offers no ready solution for the name Níl, it is probably derived either from its being thought worthy of comparison with the Nile of Egypt, or else in commemoration of some important event in the intercourse between the Egyptian and Chaldæan nations.

If the mounds of Warka have failed in yielding bas-reliefs and objects of a higher class of interest, like those dug from the palaces of Assyria, they have at least afforded abundance of important information on two subjects of which we were previously in comparative igno-

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rance; namely:—Babylonian architecture, and the mode of burial during twenty centuries preceding the Christian era. From these researches, we learn the existence of a new and original style of architecture, entirely uninfluenced by the exalted taste which subsequently prevailed; and the situation of a necropolis of enormous extent and extraordinary sanctity, probably derived from the most remote antiquity.

If there be a scarcity of early annals, and of more positive information than could have been desired, the fault must be assigned to the great difficulties attending excavations at so inaccessible a spot, and to the superimposed quantity of funeral remains covering up the older relics.

It is to be remembered that these results were obtained during the short period of three months, and that the excavations were continually interrupted by overwhelming sand-storms. Warka may still be considered as unexplored; the depths of its mounds are yet untouched. If those of Nineveh were not thoroughly examined in thirteen years, those of Warka will require a much longer period, before we can arrive at anything like a full appreciation of their contents, and of the valuable information to be derived from them.

For the sake of science, it is to be hoped that, at some period not far distant, excavations may be resumed among the mounds of Chaldæa; and I do not hesitate to state my conviction that each site will yield its own peculiar records of a past and almost forgotten age, and that Warka—the most extraordinary and important of them all—will afford memorials and relics yielding to none in value and interest. From them we may hope for much additional light, not only concerning the early Chaldæan and Achæmenian periods, but also with relation to its Greek and Parthian occupiers, down to about the Christian era.

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CHAPTER XX.

Sinkara—Decamping—Ride in a Sand-drift—The Negro Lion-slayer—A Nocturnal Visiter—Dull uniformity of Sinkára—The Temple of Pharra—The Dream and its Fulfilment—Nebuchadnezzar and Nebonit rebuilders of Temples—Another great Necropolis—Tablets and their Envelopes of Clay—Babylonian Arithmetic—Pictorial Records—Boxers in the Land of Shinar—The Dog-devourer.

HAVING made such excavations as appeared to me desirable at Warka, I determined on visiting the neighbouring ruins of Sinkara, which had previously been reached by Dr Ross of Bághdád, and Mr Baillie Fraser, during a hasty journey they made through the Jezíreh, in the year 1834. In order to effect this purpose, I stated my wish to the Bedouin Sheikh Tellág, one day while he was honouring my tent with a visit. He was no sooner made aware of my object than, seizing my hand, he exclaimed:—"Beg, are we not brothers? Is not your wish my wish? Are not my sheep and cattle, my mare and my camels, yours also? God is great! I came here to say that I was about to go to Sinkara, where there is at least something for my beasts to eat—which there is not here—and you gladden my heart by saying that you are going to Sinkara also. What can I do for you? Beg! my camels and all I have are at your service; take as many as you please, and accompany me. On the word of a Shammar, no one shall injure you while under my shadow, neither shall any of my people harm your workmen. Have I not already said it? The word of a Shammar is

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truth." I took him at his word, and in a few minutes all preliminaries were arranged.

At daybreak on the third day after this conversation, all the camp was astir with the usual sounds of preparation. Amidst the unmusical gurglings of Tellág's camels (which were forthcoming at the time agreed upon), and the corresponding gutturals of their Arab masters, the din of camp followers, and the war-songs of the Mádán, my tents were struck and the loads packed. In true Arab fashion, the brushwood (which had afforded shelter to the workmen) and the refuse of the camp were set fire to as we quitted the ground, and the spot, which, during the past three months, had been a scene of constant bustle and confusion, once more resumed its wonted solitude and repose. Tellág's tribe was already in motion, and his long strings of camels stalked majestically along the barren desert, towards a more verdant pasturage; but, before we could join our forces, a furious squall arose from the south-east, and completely enveloped us in a tornado of sand, rendering it impossible to see within a few paces; Tellág and his camels were as invisible as though they were miles distant. A continued stream of the finest sand drove directly into our faces, filling the eyes, ears, nose, and mouth with its penetrating particles, drying up the moisture of the tongue, and choking the action of the lungs. The Arabs tied their garments closely round their faces, leaving only their sharp black eyes visible from under the protection afforded them, and each man rode or trudged along in silence, evidently unwilling to open his mouth lest it should be instantly filled with the noxious sand. We shaped our course in the direction of Sinkara, and, after proceeding some distance, were surprised to see Tellág riding on his mare, unaccompanied, through the storm. He was anxious after my safety, and had left his own party to guide my

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little caravan. But for his aid, we should in all probability have wandered into the marshes of the Shat-el-Hie. As it was, even Tellág and the Arabs could not be entirely depended on, because the density of the sand stream shut every mark from view by which they were accustomed to guide themselves. After riding for about five hours, Tellág began to look anxiously around, and to hold frequent consultations with the Arabs; it was evident we had missed the point aimed at. During a lull in the storm, however, I fortunately caught a glimpse of a distant object, looming far on our left. Tellág would scarcely believe me, but, after a while, it appeared again, and he was obliged to confess that even he had held too southerly a course. Being now satisfied concerning the whereabouts of our goal, Tellág left us to search for his own camels, which, he feared, must also have lost their way.

In approaching Sinkara, some of the advanced party fancied they observed living creatures moving upon the summit of a mound. My cook Múrád, an active and daring negro, originally a slave from Mozambique, dismounted to reconnoitre, because we were in ignorance of any Arab arrivals in the neighbourhood, and these might be either friends or foes. Múrád was a good shot; so, gun in hand, he silently advanced upon the dubious tenants of the ruins. They proved to be two lion cubs, one of which lay fast asleep, while the other gambolled round its fellow like a kitten at play. Múrád fired a charge of large shot, and, on hastening up, found one animal dead, and the other mortally wounded, attempting in its pain to bite the body of its companion. The fortunate sportsman was immediately hailed as "Abú Sebá'ín," "the father of the two lions," at which Múrád exposed his rows of white teeth with every symptom of pride and satisfaction. From that day he was ever afterwards

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known by the above honourable soubriquet, and regarded with reverential awe by the Arabs, as an invincible warrior, who killed two lions at once.

The bodies were carried to the ruins, where the tents were pitched, upon a flat and convenient situation for the encampment. The camels were unloaded, and again dismissed with a strong party to fill the water-skins at the Shat-el-Káhr two miles beyond the ruins, and to procure brushwood to protect the Arabs against the cold wind and driving sand.

Before darkness set in, the chief part of the camp was fast asleep, completely worn out with the fatigue of the day's march; the watchmen alone sat silently keeping guard around their little fires, which burned for a few seconds furiously under the impulse of fresh fuel and the high wind, and then sank, half extinguished under a deluge of sand. Towards midnight the hurricane abated, and silence reigned profound, when a sudden, deep, sepulchral roar, several times repeated, roused the whole camp once more to life and activity. "The lion! the lion!" shouted the Arabs, as they drew closer together, piled brushwood on the watch-fires, grasped their spears, sang their war-cry, and exhibited other signs of violent trepidation and alarm. No more sleep for them that night: they huddled round the fires in parties, told stories of adventures with wild beasts till they frightened themselves into the belief that the lion was close upon them, when their shouts and songs would be redoubled, in the hope of driving the king of beasts away. The horses snorted, tugged at their ropes, and evinced every disposition to free themselves from the trammels which bound them. There was no moon, so that the deep intensity of the surrounding gloom added to the fears of the little community. Several times that night I was aroused by their sudden outcries and wild shouts.

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At daybreak, it was discovered that the wary animal had made off with a little dog belonging to the Arabs, which had barked pertinaciously on the first notification of our unwelcome visitor's presence. The huge footprints of the hungry and irate brute were distinctly visible on the surface of the newly drifted sand, pacing round and round, at a respectful distance from the camp. With daylight she withdrew to her lair among the reeds and underwood along the course of the Shat-el-Káhr.

Lions frequent the marshes of this region at certain seasons, and do much damage among the flocks and herds of the Arabs, who, as I have said, shift their camps to the banks of the Káhr for the culture of grain during the early spring. It is seldom that the king of beasts dares to attack man, unless driven by stress of hunger. When the Arabs muster strongly near Sinkara, there is generally abundance of sheep and buffaloes to assuage his hunger; but the Arabs are terrified to approach the Káhr alone, and I frequently saw them, when obliged to do so, return into camp trembling with fear.

The ruins of Sinkara, situated fifteen miles south-east of Warka, stand on the extreme verge of the broad desert ridge, which, as before mentioned, intervenes between the inundations of the Euphrates on the west, and the marshes of the Shat-el-Káhr on the east. In ordinary seasons, the waters of the Káhr extend close up to the eastern base of the ruins. These consist of a low circular platform, about four and a-half miles in circumference, rising gradually from the level of the plain to a central mound, the highest point of which is seventy feet, and is distinctly visible from Warka and the Euphrates. Adjoining this principal pile on the north-west, is a low extensive ruin, apparently consisting of a series of brick walls and pavements. At four hundred paces, on the north-east of the great ruin, is a high mound of large,

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half-baked red bricks, at the base of which is traceable, by the colour of the soil, the outline of an ancient square enclosure, and small chambers between thick walls. The south-east edge of the whole platform is occupied by an undulating ruin of considerable extent, composed of mud bricks, and known to the Arabs by the name of "Jemel," or the camel, from the peculiar hump which rises from its centre.

The surface of the rest of the ruins is covered with pavements, varying from thirty to forty feet square, elevated a few feet above the general debris, and constructed of small rough bricks; on the north-east these pavements are of very frequent occurrence.

It is evident, from the first inspection of these ruins, that they all belong to one period, and that no later races of different origin have built upon the edifices erected by the ancient people. There are no coins, no glass, no glazed pottery, as at Warka; but a uniform dull brown hue pervades everything about the place: the fine dust, the bricks, the pottery, are of the same sombre colour; the only relief being presented in the north-east mound, whose deep red bricks afford a pleasing contrast to the general dingy aspect of the place. The soil on the surface of the mounds at Warka was soft and yielding, but that of Sinkara was infinitely more impalpable.

My first efforts* were directed to the principal ruin, which is of oval form, its longest diameter being from north-west to south-east. Owing to the quantity of rubbish with which it is encumbered, the expenditure of a very large amount of money and labour would be required before its complete plan can be understood. I was able to ascertain, however, that the edifice crowning its summit was included within an oval space, whose diameters

* The excavations and results here described are wholly due to the Assyrian Excavation Fund.

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measured three hundred and twenty feet by two hundred and twenty feet. The area was circumscribed by a wall four feet two inches thick, which is traceable, with a few breaks, from the centre of the north-east side towards the south, and so to the west point of the mound where it is lost, having fallen or been carried away piecemeal. It is built of square bricks, firmly set with bitumen, and having a thirteen-line inscription of Nebuchadnezzar upon the under side of each.

At the distance of thirty-six feet from the extreme south-east curve of this wall, and at the height of about six feet above its level, a trench dug into the mound exposed the wall of a terrace extending from south-west to north-east. A second terrace, six feet above the first, and seventy-four feet behind it, stood in front of what has undoubtedly been the principal façade of the edifice which crowned the summit, and formed the main feature of the ruins.* Although not more than four feet in height, the character of this building might still be determined. The front extended sixty-five feet in length, then receded twelve feet, and ultimately resumed its former line forty feet towards the south-east and six feet in the opposite direction, beyond which it was not traced. An entrance, nine feet wide, was discovered in the centre of the sixty-five feet front, which was ornamented with ten stepped recesses, each one foot nine inches wide, similar to those on the walls of the Wuswas edifice of Warka, and the small oratory at the foot of the Múgeyer. The brickwork measured five feet thick, and was backed with a mass of sun-dried brick, from which it is evident that the upper erection was a sun-dried tower, faced, like the Múgeyer, with burnt bricks. On the left entrance-pier, close under

* The position of this structure, with its angles facing the cardinal points, corresponds with that of Múgeyer, Wuswas, and other edifices of Chaldæan origin, as previously remarked.

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the surface, lay a much-damaged barrel-shaped cylinder, which appeared to have rolled from among the sun-dried bricks, and to have remained a length of time exposed to the weather.

A trench was carried through the entrance up a sloping pavement, covered with a thick coating of bitumen, and bounded by brick walls. The pavement, however, ceased at fourteen feet, and introduced us into a most unpromising mass of mud brickwork. Continuing the excavation a few feet, however, the workmen came upon a second pavement, the position of the bricks directed towards the centre or highest point of the ruin. Turning the trench, therefore, at an angle of forty-five degrees from its former course, the excavation was continued, and at length rewarded our endeavours by the exhumation of a second, smaller, but quite perfect, cylinder, about three feet under the surface, and five feet above the pavement. It stood upright among the mud-bricks, without any previous indication of its presence. Both at the Múgeyer and at the Bírs Nimrúd, the similar records, as I have stated, were discovered in receptacles prepared for them, but in this instance the cylinder lay completely surrounded and in contact with the brickwork. It is five and three-quarter inches long, and is unequally divided by a line round the thick part of the barrel. On one side are twenty-five, and on the other twenty-six, lines of cuneiform inscription.

This discovery was accompanied with an amusing incident. My servant Ovannes, who was a great believer in the truth of dreams, came into my tent one morning before daybreak, to say that he was unable to sleep all night from being perpetually tormented by a big cylinder, which he attempted to lay hold of, but which always eluded his grasp. He was certain that this dream was a revelation of some wonderful discovery in the course of

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the day, and therefore begged he might be allowed to mark out one or two new trenches. He was so energetic on the subject, that, to satisfy him, I granted his request. Soon after the men commenced work, I was induced, by a great shouting, to go to the door of my tent. Ovannes was running at full speed down the slope of the great mound, as if the lion were after him. In his haste, he tripped and turned a somersault to the infinite amusement of the Arabs and myself, who, unable to conceive the meaning of this caper, imagined he had gone mad. At last he approached sufficiently near to explain the cause of all the excitement. "A cylinder! a cylinder!" he cried; "I told you, Beg, that my dream would prove true!" A cylinder he certainly brought, obtained, however, not from his new trenches, but from the great trench in the principal mound.

Continuing the trench through the unbaked brickwork to the highest point of the mound, the workmen came upon a mass of masonry, which, for some time, puzzled me exceedingly. It proved to be a tomb of peculiar construction and undoubted antiquity, nearly every brick bearing a stamped dedication of a temple to the Sun by Urukh, the common founder of Warka and Niffar. That it was an original work, was also evident from the fact that it was surrounded and covered by the mud bricks, which contained the inscribed cylinder; it was likewise evident that it was purposely concealed, because the exterior was rough and daubed with bitumen, and would indicate that the tomb was erected with the mound. On digging downwards, a second and similar tomb was discovered below the first, but, at the depth of twelve feet, I failed to reach the base. Both tombs were built into and against the inside of a solid wall, five feet in thickness, but they had been plundered, most probably, centuries ago. The walls were three feet three inches thick; and the

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interiors measured six feet deep, and one foot ten inches wide; the length being six and a-half feet, of which one foot ten inches, at one extremity, were covered by a vaulted arch, formed by the overlapping of each course of bricks beyond the layer immediately below.

Another trench, at right angles to that in which the cylinder occurred, revealed the corner of a foundation-wall set in bitumen, six and a-half feet high, and the same in thickness. Many of the bricks bore the same legend of Nebuchadnezzar as that upon the oval wall at the base of the mound. From the lowest layers at this corner were obtained two bricks, one edge of each of which was minutely inscribed with precisely the same record as that upon the barrel cylinders, thus, beyond doubt, fixing the date of the upper part of the mound above the tombs as early as the time of Nebuchadnezzar, about 600 B.C. This is confirmed by Sir Henry Rawlinson's decipherment of the inscriptions.* He states that they commemorate the rebuilding of the temple of Pharra, by that monarch, in the city of Larrak. A description of the same work occurs on Bellino's cylinder from Babylon, published by Grotefend. Nebuchadnezzar is represented as digging into the foundations of the old temple of the Sun, which had fallen to ruins, for the purpose of obtaining the ancient idol, with the intention of placing it in his new edifice. Having excavated for a considerable time, he was obliged to give up a fruitless search, and to finish his building without it.

The same authority elsewhere states, that "throughout the Babylonian monuments—that is, on the bricks found at Niffar, at Sinkara, and at Warka, as well as on

* A third and perfect cylinder was also discovered at a distant part of the ruins. These numerous copies of the same legend are the more valuable, because of the many variations which occur in the cuneiform characters upon them.

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the tablets of Nebuchadnezzar—the city in question is named *Sikkara* or *Sinkareh.*" He further conjectures that the *Lanchara* of Berosus, which was the capital of the original Chaldæan dynasty, is a mistake of some ancient copyist for *Sanchara.**

In this name we probably have preserved that of *Shinar*, the land from whence the Biblical migration took place.

A king named Purna-Puriyas† was also a builder here. I picked up a brick with a legend of sixteen lines bearing this name, which was at that time, I believe, new to Sir Henry Rawlinson's list.

An excavation was made into the centre and base of "El Heimar," or the "red" mound. It proved to be wholly composed of half-baked red bricks, measuring fourteen inches square, and four and-a-half inches in thickness. As in other buildings of similar character, previously described in these pages, layers of reeds occur at intervals between the bricks, and the entire mass is pierced horizontally with numerous square apertures. Its interior yielded no information, but a patch of building at the base of its eastern corner afforded a legend of Nebonit, the last king of Babylon, under whose reign, as before mentioned, the empire was overthrown by the united forces of the Medes and Persians, about 538 B.C. This monarch, like his predecessor, Nebuchadnezzar, appears to have repaired a more ancient structure, for, at the northern corner of the same ruin, there was uncovered a fragment of brick masonry, with a legend of the Chaldæan king Khammurabi, who is supposed to have flourished about 1500 B.C.

With the subsequent rise of the Persian empire after the

* See Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Royal Asiatic Society for 1852, p. 15. *Sinkara* is likewise supposed to be the *Sarsa* of other inscriptions, as stated in the Proceedings of the Royal Geog. Society, p. 47. I cannot attempt to reconcile these different identifications.

† This monarch seems to have reigned about 1650 B.C.

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fall of Babylon, Sinkara declined in importance; the latest record obtained from its mounds being a small clay tablet inscribed with the name of Cambyses. From that period, Warka, the great rival of Sinkara, assumed a higher rank, at least as a place of sepulture, and engrossed the whole consideration which it had previously shared in conjunction with Sinkara. It appears to have been the only city throughout that region which survived the great convulsion attending the taking of Babylon. With the extinction of the native rulers, Múgeyer, Sinkara, Abú Shehreyn, Tel Sifr, Medína, and numerous other sites in Chaldæa, were deserted, and have remained so to this day. Warka alone maintained its position five hundred years longer as the capital of the district,—saw the enfeebled dominion of the Persian pass into the hands of the Grecian conqueror, and from him in turn to the barbarous Parthian, when he, too, succumbed under the changeable character of the times.

The aspect of the mounds of Sinkara fully bears out the opinion as to their early abandonment, arrived at from an investigation of the inscriptions obtained from them. It is not among the loftiest mounds that we are to expect the oldest relics. All the more ancient ruins of Chaldæa are but slightly raised above the desert level, and the accumulations of ages are invariably sepulchral; this is the characteristic feature of Chaldæan mounds. It would appear that the early inhabitants, like those of modern days, made a practice of burying their dead at certain places held sacred, from time immemorial, by the erection of a temple dedicated to some deity. Sinkara is one of these, and its sepulchral remains are among the most interesting discoveries made during my excavations.

If evidence were required that the early Chaldæans

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practised the rite of burial, Sinkara furnishes it beyond the shadow of a doubt. The whole area of the ruins is a cemetery; wherever an excavation was made, vaults and graves invariably occurred, and the innumerable cuneiform records contained in them substantiate their undoubted antiquity. So numerous were the clay tablets, I almost arrived at the conclusion that the fine brown dust of the mounds resulted from their decomposition!

Many of the platforms mentioned on the north-east side of the ruins were examined, and proved to be family vaults. In digging down, the workmen frequently found a series of small connected chambers, containing quantities of wood-ashes and partially-burned clay tablets. These were with difficulty extracted entire and afterwards preserved, in consequence of the damage received from fire and their state of natural disintegration from the nitrous earth composing them. Below the chambers were frequently large vaulted tombs, containing one or more bodies, which were constructed in a peculiar manner. Layers of bricks were placed at an angle of forty-five degrees, so as to rest upon the layer previously laid in the same position. They were supported by an outer wall inclining towards the tomb, the other extremity of which was closed with a corresponding wall leaning in the opposite direction. The bricks used were generally small, of coarse texture, and of light yellow baked clay; but they were frequently merely composed of sun-dried mud. The cement was, in all cases, mud. The roofs were circular, and exhibited traces of red paint.

The skeleton was always extremely fragile, and crumbled to dust at the slightest touch. As at Múgeyer, it usually lay on the left side, with the finger bones before the face. A common baked clay plate was

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placed on either side, with jars and vases of various forms. Some of the latter are exceedingly elegant, particularly one of convolvulus shape, which is commonly met with at Sinkara, and appears to be the type of the modern drinking kúja used at Bághdád. A few of the forms of pottery peculiar to these ruins are engraved in the accompanying woodcut. In one vault, the bones of

Pottery from Sinkara.

several other skeletons were heaped up in the corners, evidently for the purpose of giving place to the last deposited body, which occupied the centre of the tomb. An armlet lay in the right upper corner, and a large jar near the right foot contained a small tooth-comb, made of bone. Among the dust was a rude white cylinder, and an onyx bead, with a rudely engraved figure upon it.

In another vault was the skeleton of a tall large-boned man. With the bones of the feet lay two copper rings, and near the chest a small lapis-lazuli frog, and a couple of agate beads. On the left of the body were five knuckle-bones of sheep, and a copper dish ; on the right were two beautiful heart-shaped red vases. In a corner near the feet were two large water-jars, and, close to the head, a smaller one containing several beads and wood ornaments, perhaps the tassel of a sash ; also, a small head of white stone or plaster, much defaced, through the fore-

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head of which is a pin for fastening it to a stick or mace. In the chamber above were numbers of inscribed clay tablets.

The contents of the vaults varied considerably. In one, an urn contained a piece of dark-brown unbaked clay, moulded into the form of a human hand and arm, ten inches in length, which fell to pieces with its own weight. A second jar contained nothing but two copper armlets; a third, some fish's bones, and a small terra-cotta figure representing a body in a coffin with a mace (?) in each hand. A small and beautifully moulded human head, in unbaked clay, also occurred in another tomb.

Terra-cotta figure of a body in a coffin.

In many instances, the bones of the skeletons were found in the upper chambers, but these were always crushed by the superincumbent weight of earth. It was from these chambers that the clay records were obtained. There were several distinct varieties. The most common were minutely-inscribed small tablets, contained within a thin clay envelope, similarly inscribed, and likewise covered with the impressions of those cylinder seals, of which so many are to be seen in our museums. These tablets were doubtless family records, but they are highly interesting, because they shew us the particular use to which the cylinder-seals were applied. The Chaldæans were not contented with a simple impression, but rolled the cylinder over the entire written document, thus preventing all chance or possibility of forgery. The clay of the tablet must have been perfectly dry before it was enclosed, because the inner side of the envelope bears a cast, in relief, of the inscription beneath. These records vary from an inch to four or five inches in length; but the thinness of the envelope causes it to be seldom

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found entire.* One of the smallest of these enclosed tablets, with its envelope tolerably perfect, bore upon it the name of Cambyses.

Clay cakes, three inches in diameter, are also of frequent occurrence with rude cuneiform inscriptions on one or both sides.†

There is evidence, too, that the early inhabitants of Babylonia used other materials for their written documents. Among the tablets were found many triangular lumps of clay covered, like them, with the impressions of rolled cylinders. At two of the corners are the holes through which cords passed and attached them to parchment, papyrus, or leather.

From the fact that many of these objects were damaged by fire, there is every reason to believe that it was a prevalent custom of the Babylonians to burn the private records of the dead over their graves. I know of no other cause to account for their blackened appearance, and the quantity of wood-ashes with which they are always associated.

Among other clay documents, I must not omit to mention a small tablet, which confirms the statement of Berosus, that the Babylonians made use of a sexagesimal notation—the unit of which was termed a "Sossius"—as well as a decimal notation. The record in question is a table of squares. It has been already published by Sir Henry Rawlinson;‡ but I am tempted to extract from it the following, as a specimen of the advance made at that early date in arithmetical calculations :—

* The same system of enveloping tablets in clay cases likewise prevailed at Nineveh. In examining the numerous collections in the British Museum, I observed one or two with envelopes attached, and the form of many others indicates that they had once been enclosed. This fact had hitherto escaped observation.

† Mr Layard figures a cake of somewhat similar kind at p. 154 of his "Nineveh and Babylon."

‡ Journal of Royal Geogr. Society, vol. xv., p. 218, note.

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Soss.	Units.		Soss.	Units.*		The Square of		
		or	50	25	=		or 55^2	= 3025
		or	52	16	=		or 56^2	= 3136
		or	54	9	=		or 57^2	= 3249
		or	56	4	=		or 58^2	= 3364
		or	58	1	=		or 59^2	= 3481
		or	60	00	=		or 60^2	= 3600

"As we here find the Unit and the Soss to be both represented by , while the decades of each series are indicated by <, it is evident that the Babylonian notation consisted of a double recurring series, in which the elements < and were used respectively for the decades and units of the integers of 60."

The upper chambers of the Sinkara tombs also yielded a few curious tablets of baked clay, which are not only interesting as exhibiting the state of the arts, but as illustrating the costume, occupation, and worship of the Chaldæans. The sculptures in the palaces of Nineveh were historical monuments, erected by the kings of Assyria to perpetuate their own exploits and greatness; but the people are only shewn as subservient to the will of their monarch. In the little tablets from Sinkara is depicted the everyday life of the people, modelled by themselves, without any royal influence to produce the best works of the best artists. Rude as they are, these designs prove that the Chaldæans—if they had pos-

* The calculation is made thus:—50 Soss. × 60 + 25 = 3025, or 55^2.
It should be mentioned that 60 units = 1 Sossus.
60 Sossi = 1 Sarus.

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sessed stone for the purpose — could have executed sculptures equal, if not superior, to those of the Assyrians; and that the palaces and temples of the Chaldæan kings were, undoubtedly, as highly ornamented as either those of Egypt or Assyria—not, perhaps, with bas-reliefs, but with "figures portrayed upon the walls" in coloured plaster.

The following tablets* may be mentioned as having been found over the same vault :—

Clay Tablet from a Tomb at Sinkara.

1. Two figures, apparently boys, boxing, in the most approved fashion of the "ring"—a proof that the pugilistic art was practised and understood in the marshes of Chaldæa centuries before England was known to the world! The positions taken by the figures are admirable. They are either stripped for the purpose, or they wear a costume similar to the Mádán tribes of the present day—an abba, or cloak, tied round the waist, the rest of the body being bare. On their heads are skull-caps. A third figure, standing with his back to the

* The tablet representing a man and Indian dog, obtained in Babylonia by Sir Henry Rawlinson, and figured at page 527 of Layard's "Nineveh and Babylon," much resembles these Sinkara tablets, and was probably procured by the Arabs from an ancient grave or tomb.

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combatants, seems to appeal over a huge vase, much resembling those used in interring the dead, to a female (?) wearing a long garment and a turban. She is seated on a stool beating cymbals.

2. A lion disturbed in his feast off a bullock, by a man armed with club and hatchet. The costume of the human figure somewhat resembles that of the modern Arab: it consists of an abba thrown over the shoulders, a short

Clay Tablet from Sinkara.

tunic, and a band of camel's hair round the head. The action of the lion roaring and lashing his tail with mane erect (although one paw is very rudely represented) is extremely spirited, and shews considerable knowledge of the lion on the part of the artist. A fragment has been broken out, and again mended with bitumen.

3. This tablet is not flat like the others, but is made with a projecting stand, and rounded at the back. Upon it is represented the figure with the conical head-dress, and long robes, usually seen upon small cylinders, and of which impressions occur upon the inscribed tablets. One foot is placed on a kind of stool, and the left hand holds a mace or some indescribable implement. Above

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are the Chaldæan emblems—the crescent, and an eight rayed star enclosed within a circle. The tablet is pierced with three holes.

Clay Tablet from Sinkara.

From the tombs were obtained tablets, with figures of a lion devouring a prostrate human being ; a man carrying a fish ; and an Indian dog.

The lion appears, from these tablets, to have been indigenous to the Chaldæan marshes in very early times. I much doubt, however, if the modern Arab would dare, single-handed, to attack the infuriated beast while satiating his hunger on his prey. Frequently, during my stay at Sinkara, the deep grunt of the lioness was audible upon the mounds or close to the precincts of the camp. I had many times before heard what is called the roar of the lion on the banks of the Tigris, but it considerably disappointed my expectations. The preconceived idea of a lion's roar is of something noble and terrible in the extreme ; this, however, is not the case with the lion of Mesopotamia; the sound which he utters is like the squall of a child in pain, or the first cry of the jackal at sunset, but infinitely louder, clearer, and more prolonged.

The nocturnal wail of the lioness at Sinkara in search of her cubs was truly imposing, and struck terror into the hearts of my nearly naked Arabs. I could scarcely

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be persuaded that it was not the lion himself, until they, one and all, declared positively it was the lioness. During the day-time she lay quiet in the jungle by the side of the Káhr, and was only seen once or twice by a solitary shepherd. At night her approach was always made known to us by the vehement barking of some half-dozen dogs belonging to the Arabs, which gave furious tongue at some distance from the camp. The lioness was too cunning for our canine guardians; gradually their number decreased, until our greatest favourite, Toga, alone remained. One pitch dark night Toga was more energetic than usual in warning us of our enemy's position; at last, apparently tired of his exertions, he returned sullenly into camp, and lay down close to my tent-ropes, growling audibly. Soon afterwards a sudden rush, followed by two or three bounds, making the very ground tremble like the galloping of horsemen, informed the whole encampment that the dog-devourer was among us. Poor Toga was heard to give one stifled yelp, and all was over with our last guardian; he was carried off and demolished at a meal. The insatiable monster had crouched behind the rubbish of an adjoining excavation, waiting her opportunity for the fatal spring. Her traces were next morning visible in the sand, passing within a few yards of a watch-fire, which was surrounded by a party of Arabs in full conclave. It may be imagined that, on the first notice of the dreaded beast's approach, they were scattered like a flock of sheep. The camp never recovered its composure

Clay Tablet from Sinkara.

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again that night, and the following day's work was but a sorry one.

Fearing for the safety of the horses and camels, as soon as the animal made known her presence next evening, I hastily proposed an expedition against her, and set out armed, with "Abú Sebá'in," and Mahommed Agha, my cawas carrying loaded guns. The Arabs were told to follow if they pleased. We crept silently to the summit of the red mound, and halted to ascertain where the enemy lay. Here Ovannes, Tellág (who had come to spend the evening with me), and Budda, as a matter of course, with a few of the Tuweyba, soon joined us, all armed with spears. Tellág, undertaking the office of monitor, with ominous voice reminded me that it was very dark, and that the wild beast was mad from the loss of her young, and from her continued taste of blood. Seizing me by the arm, and pointing to the spear which I carried, he exclaimed :—"Beg! if the tufenk (gun) misses, what, in the name of Allah, is the use of that reed?" I was perfectly sensible of the correctness of his remark, but was determined to proceed further, if it were only to ascertain whether the hearts of my men were in their right places. We descended from the red mound, and advanced towards the foot of the great ruin ; but alas! it became more and more evident, each step we proceeded, that, although Tellág and the Arabs would have willingly bared their arms, tied up the sleeves of their zibbúns, and followed me against a human enemy by daylight, they were not disposed to attack an enraged lioness in the dread darkness of night. If the beast could have been seen in the distance, all would have made off at full speed to the camp. Mahommed Agha could scarcely hold his gun from fear. At the base of the great ruin a second halt was called, and we listened attentively. Something was heard to stir among the bricks on the summit, and the

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next instant the queen of beasts uttered a loud roar; my companions, with one accord, looked behind them to ascertain if the coast were clear. An instant afterwards her roar was again heard as she made off in the distance, to the unspeakable relief of my companions-in-arms.

In returning to camp, the Arabs determined to eke out their excitement by a piece of fun. At a convenient distance a general shriek was raised, and all rushed towards the watchfires at full speed, as if the lioness were at our heels. The Arabs who remained in camp, thinking such was really the case, ran out to give us succour, grasping their spears and singing their war-cry as usual. When the deception was discovered, a merry laughing ensued, and each man sang and danced with the excitement. In this scene the Arab character appeared without disguise. Unwilling to make an attack in cold blood and darkness upon a wild beast, those in camp were prepared to resist an attack, and to advance to the aid of their fellows, whom they supposed in danger. Tellág, however, did not so soon forget the rashness of the enterprise: he followed me into my tent, and expostulated with me on the subject. "She is gone now," said he, "but will most assuredly attack and kill the first Arab she meets, out of revenge for our attempt against her!"

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CHAPTER XXI.

Treasures found at Tel Sifr—Juvenile Footpads—Medína—Yúsuf and his Excavations at Tel Sifr—Large Collection of Curiosities in Copper—Private Records, B.C. 1500—Female Excavators—The Works in Chaldæa abruptly interrupted—Leave-taking—Grateful Labourers—Embarkation on the Euphrates—River-craft and Amphibious Arabs—"The Mother of Mosquitoes."

FROM Sinkara several large mounds are visible across the Shat-el-Káhr, among which Ablah, El-Assám, and Tel Sifr, are the most important. Having heard from the Tuweyba promising accounts of the last-named ruin, and of one more distant, called Medína, I paid them a visit, and was induced to send a couple of working parties, under the direction of overseers, to open trenches at positions I had marked out. At daybreak on the fourth day after their departure, a messenger arrived from Tel Sifr, with the information that a quantity of copper articles were discovered on the previous evening, as the men were leaving off work. I was preparing to set out at once, but was informed that the Káhr had risen so considerably as to render it impossible for me to cross without a boat. While reflecting on the best plan to be adopted, a second messenger arrived with a basketful of the new-found treasures. He informed me that there were as many as a mule's load waiting to be conveyed across the Shat-el-Káhr. He had crossed with the copper on his head and the water reaching to his chin.

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While an Arab was despatched to Tellág to borrow sheep-skins for a raft, Ovannes proposed to ride off without delay and swim the stream on horseback. This was the only method of getting over the difficulty; so away he went, accompanied by an Arab on a mule, carrying the baskets which the cook used for the conveyance of his pots and kettles. He took with him a small box, a packet of paper, and a bag of cotton for wrapping up any fragile articles which might require especial care.

He had scarcely disappeared when a third messenger arrived—this time from Medína—with a small tablet of unbaked clay from the surface of a tomb. The poor fellow was shivering with ague, induced by fright, from encountering a lion by the way. He thought his last hour arrived; for the animal espied him, lashed his tail, and roared as he made towards the terrified Arab, who sank to the earth with a prayer for the protection of Allah. On waking from the stupor into which he had fallen, he discovered, to his great relief, that his prayer was granted, and that the lion had disappeared; he, therefore, lost no time in putting the river between himself and the animal. The poor fellow arrived completely stricken with fear.

Shortly afterwards I was met by a fourth messenger from Tel Sifr, who brought with him a very beautiful and quite perfect tablet of unbaked clay, as a specimen of "kethír! kethír!"—"many! many!" which had been just discovered. Ovannes had not met this messenger, and, therefore, received a welcome surprise on reaching the Tel. The overseer, Yúsuf, was in the act of wrapping up the last of a large collection of beautiful tablets. Having exhausted all the stock of paper taken for the purpose, he was driven to the sad alternative of tearing up his blue calico trousers, and the skirts of his shirt, to supply the deficiency. Ovannes found him directing ope-

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rations in his drawers. All the spoils were soon packed, and conveyed to the Shat-el-Káhr upon the back of the mule, which staggered under the weight of the burden. They were there unloaded and carried in baskets across the river on a man's head—the same who broke his collar bone a month previously! He was a tall strong man, and walked with the water just reaching to his mouth, while two Arabs swam on either side supporting him.

Tellág collected from the women of the Shammar camp half-a-dozen water-skins, and, next morning at daybreak, they were sent down to the Shat-el-Káhr, where they were tied to a few pieces of wood and tamarisk twigs, cut from the brushwood which grew at hand, and, in a few minutes, converted into a primitive kélek. The horses were soon stripped, a saddle-cloth was spread for my seat, and, with a "bismillah,"—"in the name of God"—I was pushed off into the stream. At the point chosen for crossing, a large island divided the Shat-el-Káhr into two parts. In the first branch the water reached to the shoulders of the two Arabs who guided the kélek before them.

The horses were led over by their groom, and the kélek made a second voyage for Ovannes and the saddles. It was then carried across the island to the larger branch of the stream, over which we were transported in a similar manner, except that, the channel being two hundred feet wide, deep, and with a rapid current, the kélekjís were obliged to swim, and we drifted a considerable distance together down the Shat. The horses were saddled, and we once more set off at a round pace in the direction pointed out as that of Tel Sifr, for it was impossible to see through a driving sand-storm. After riding about an hour, we approached a large mound, which proved to be that of El Assám—much to the left of our proper course. Being then nearer to Medína than to Tel Sifr, I deter-

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mined to visit the former place first, in order to see what had been done there. In galloping along, I was hailed by two shepherd boys, belonging to the main divisions of the Tuweyba tribe, whose tents were in the neighbourhood. The older might be twelve, the younger ten years of age; they were armed with clubs and spears. "Stop, stop! don't be afraid; we will not hurt you!" said they, running up, with their long hair streaming over their swarthy shoulders. "It is *you* who should be afraid; we are horsemen—you are on foot," said I. "Oh! but we don't fear *two* horsemen only, if there be no more behind," replied the younger little fellow, as he looked in the direction we had come. He was a fine intelligent boy, with sparkling black eyes, that betokened a future Sheitán, or dare-devil. "But horsemen sometimes carry fire," I replied, pointing to my holsters. "Yes! I know fire kills, but that saddle cannot hurt," he retorted, as he touched the leather case. "No! *that* cannot harm you, but *this* might," said I, exposing the butt-end of a pistol. "God is great!" exclaimed the young hero, as he coloured up, and drew himself a step back from the dreaded weapon. Being eventually assured that we were friends, they directed us towards Medína, which we reached after a quarter of an hour's further ride, by which time the wind and dust had abated.

The overseer, whom I had despatched to this ruin, was a very shrewd, active, and honest young fellow, named Hannah, a Chaldæan from Mosul, who had worked in the trenches at Nineveh. He was one of my best men, and usually proved lucky; he was delighted to see me, but his look at once announced that, on this occasion, his customary good fortune had failed him. His numerous trenches had only yielded a single clay tablet, a few insignificant copper articles, and pottery of the forms common at Sinkara, among which were some pretty

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specimens of the bell-shaped drinking vase.* The fault was not Hannah's: he had dug deeply and earnestly.

The mounds were of considerable extent, running in a line from south-west to north-east. There was nothing to shew that Medína had been more than a small cemetery. It abounded in brick vaults, similar to those at Sinkara, one of which contained no less than four skeletons, lying one upon the other. The workmen were afraid of the solitude; there were no Arabs in the neighbourhood, so that they were obliged to sleep at night in the tombs which they had discovered during the day. A dismal place it certainly was, with an unbounded view of marsh towards the south-east, and a desert bearing an abundant crop of ancient remains, in every other direction. The water reached to the base of the mound—a perfect dead sea—without reeds, or other evidence of vegetation appearing on its salt-incrusted shore. The Arabs pointed out Shatra† in the distance, but it was far beyond my vision. They begged hard to be allowed to return, and, there being no great prospect of a successful issue in further excavations, their request was granted. A minute or two sufficed to pack up their property, and to turn their faces campwards.

From Medína I galloped to Tel Sifr, at the foot of which was encamped a numerous body of the Tuweyba tribe. Their black tents were low and small, but arranged in long lines, at regular distances, after a more systematic manner than any Arab camp I ever saw. The denizens were a wild race, but among them I noticed many remarkably fine men and women—the latter with huge nose-rings, and other ornaments of gold and silver. Unlike my workmen, who were evidently of the lowest

* One of which is engraved at page 253.

† Shatra is a reed village among the marshes of the Shat-el-Hie—a species of market-town for the inhabitants of the surrounding region.

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class, they appeared well-fed, and otherwise in good condition; the men were lolling about at their ease, basking in the sun, or sitting by the side of the women, who were generally engaged in spinning. Their countenances bore a strong resemblance to our English gipsies. There was an air of quiet repose about the scene, quite charming to me after the noisy squabbles which ensued after each day's excavations on the ruins. The arrival of a Firenghí might have been an everyday occurrence, for they scarcely stirred from their occupations; while in other more civilised tribes men, women, and children would have collected round, in gaping astonishment.

Yúsuf and his gang were hard at work, covered with perspiration and dust; they had cut some enormous gashes into the little conical mound, which crowns a low platform nowhere exceeding forty feet above the desert. With the exception of the cone, the whole surface of the platform, which was of much less extent than Sinkara, was completely burrowed by old Budda and his grave-hunting fraternity. The dead were buried here also in oblong brick graves, for the most part vaulted, and painted red inside. The name of Tel "Sifr" is derived from the numerous "copper" articles found by the Arabs in the vaults, and was still more appropriate after Yúsuf's excavations.

A trench was dug into the south-east side of the principal mound, according to instructions, and soon came against a brick wall, which, from its position, supported by a three-feet buttress, and its elevation in two-inch gradines, was evidently the exterior of a building. Its thickness was not ascertained, but it encased an internal mass of mud brickwork, as explained by some other trenches. Following this wall for a distance of about six feet, the workmen discovered a number of copper articles arranged along it, which form a very curious

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and quite unique collection, consisting of large chaldrons, vases, small dishes, and dice-boxes (?); hammers, chisels, adzes, and hatchets; a large assortment of knives and daggers of various sizes and shapes—all unfinished; massive and smaller rings; a pair of prisoner's fetters; three links of a strong chain; a ring weight; several plates resembling horses' shoes, divided at the heel for the insertion of a handle, and having two holes in each for pins; other plates of a different shape, which were probably primitive hatchets; an ingot of copper, and a great weight of dross from the same smelted metal.* There was likewise a small fragment of a bitumen bowl overlaid with thin copper; and a piece of lead.

The conclusion arrived at from an inspection of these implements and articles is, that they were the stock-in-trade of a coppersmith, whose forge was close at hand, but the explanation of their connexion with the public edifice, near which they were discovered, is by no means clear. They are well and skilfully wrought. One of the hatchets particularly attracted my notice, being of the same form as that represented on the tablet of the man attacking the lion;† the articles which I conceive to be dice-boxes, precisely resemble those of modern form; the knives were all adhering together *en masse*, their rough broad edges proving that they were never finished by the cutler. The total absence of iron in the older ruins implies that the inhabitants were unacquainted with that metal, or at any rate that it was seldom worked. Many of the copper implements above enumerated appear to be but little adapted to the object for which they were fashioned. Copper was particularly used in the Taber-

* The whole of the articles obtained from Tel Sifr are deposited in the British Museum.

† See woodcut, page 258.

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nacle* and Temple of the Jews, and, it may be, that this metal was specially chosen for sacrificial purposes, which might account for its abundant discovery in connexion with the edifice—a temple—against the wall of which the implements were found. At any rate, the entire absence of iron, and the curious shapes of many articles, point to a primitive age for their origin.

The actual date of these copper objects is, however, to be inferred from that of the "enveloped" clay tablets which were found close to them.

These records were arranged with much care. Three mud bricks were laid down in the form of the capital letter U. The largest tablet, measuring six-and-a-quarter inches long and three inches wide, was placed upon this foundation, and the two next in size at right angles to it. The rest were piled upon them and also upon the bricks—the whole being surrounded by a reed matting, traces of which were still visibly adhering to many of the tablets. They were covered by three unbaked bricks, which accounts for the perfect preservation of so many. Several were found broken, but the fragments were carefully collected. There must have been, in all, about one hundred, of which seventy are either quite perfect or but slightly damaged.

Each tablet was inscribed in minute, complicated characters of Babylonian cuneiform, and afterwards placed in an envelope of the same material. That this thin layer of unbaked clay should have remained entire during so many centuries under a slight covering of earth, appears almost incredible! It is also strange that the

* "And he made all the vessels of the altar, the pots and the shovels, and the basins, and the flesh-hooks, and the fire-pans: all the vessels thereof made he of brass." Exodus xxxviii. gives a full account of the altar of burnt-offering and its vessels—brass being the principal metal employed. By *brass* we must understand *copper*, because the factitious metal was unknown at that early age.

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envelope had infinitely more pains bestowed upon it than the internal record, which, it is natural to suppose, was

Unbaked Clay Tablet and its Envelope.

the important document. Upon each side are inscribed about twenty lines of inscription, commencing from a broad margin on the left. Along the margin and upon all the four edges of the envelope are distinct impressions of cylindrical seals, which likewise cover the whole surface of the writing. The woodcut shews one of the tablets, with a portion of the envelope removed.*

These remarkable tablets have not been critically examined, so that I am unable to guess at the reason of the envelope having so much more elaborate pains bestowed upon it than upon the tablet itself. Sir Henry Rawlinson pronounced them, after a cursory examination, to be the documents of private persons in the time of the Chaldæan Kings Khammurabi and Shamsu-Iluna (whose name he then met with for the first time), about 1500 B.C., which nearly corresponds with the date of the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, upwards of three thousand three hundred years ago.

* The broad margin and surface seals are not exhibited in the woodcut.

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Yúsuf's excavations were much more lively and amusing than such works generally are. Their proximity to the Arab camp induced a number of the Tuweyba women and children to gather round their friends and relations. The females in their deep blue and red gowns sat spinning and chattering at the edge of the trench, and the younger part of the community, in dress of nature's own providing, gamboled round them, or stood watching when any object was being minutely examined.

In addition to the enveloped tablets and copper articles, Tel Sifr produced a third novelty—two girls were carrying baskets of earth from the trench. One, a very pretty lass of sixteen or thereabouts, had begged so hard for work to support her old, infirm mother and three young brothers and sisters, that Yúsuf could not resist the appeal. The second girl was jealous of the first one earning money, and therefore offered her services, which Yúsuf accepted in order to countenance the other. They were great favourites among the men who, with more kind feeling than the Arabs usually exhibit towards their women, picked out for them the smallest baskets, which they never wholly filled. I observed to Yúsuf that they carried their loads with infinitely greater ease and speed than the men, and that they discharged three baskets of earth while the men lazily emptied but two. Yúsuf grinned and declared he wished all his labourers were women, because they were not only quicker in their movements, but more manageable. Much merriment was created by my ordering all the men out of the trench and announcing my intention to employ only women for the future, while I paid a deserving compliment to the ladies.

A few days after this little excursion, a termination was put to my researches amid the antiquities of Chaldæa by events over which I had no control. The great

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mound at Sinkara had yielded a series of highly interesting historical annals in its bricks and cylinders, and, there being reason to anticipate the discovery of much more ancient records at a greater depth, I was anxious to continue the excavations, but in this I was destined to be sadly disappointed. The continued rise of the marshes from the overflowing of the Shat-el-Káhr, announced that the whole of Chaldæa would be in a few weeks covered with the inundations, and warned me to effect an escape while it was possible to do so. The Arabs foresaw, in the rise of the waters, a period put to the acute miseries they had endured for several successive seasons, and could no longer be restrained from quitting me to commence the cultivation of their grounds before they were submerged. It would have been an act of cruelty to detain them longer. Azayiz and Hennayin, Budda and a few inveterate grave-diggers alone remained with me, and it was evident that they too desired to depart. Tellág, in whom my hopes of continuing the excavations might have rested, came to inform me that he had entered into an agreement with the Beni Hácheym tribes to quit the ground he then occupied near Sinkara, and to retire across the Shat-el-Káhr further into the Jezíreh. His camels had already departed for their new pasture grounds. Thus there appeared every likelikood of my being left in solitary possession of the ruins, because, without means to convey away my spoils, I was unable to move. My provisions, moreover, were just exhausted, and there was no prospect, under circumstances, of a fresh supply. I was, therefore, reluctantly obliged to sacrifice my wishes to absolute necessity, and to suspend the works both at Sinkara and Tel Sifr.

On stating my dilemma to Tellág, he promised to send some of his camels back again for my accommodation,

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and in two days he not only redeemed his word, but himself returned with the animals, and on the following morning my little caravan was once more in motion towards the Euphrates. For the aid he had rendered me, Tellág was content with the present of an embroidered abba, and our parting embrace was one of mutual esteem. The friendship, begun under very unpropitious circumstances, had proved of infinite value in the arrangement of my plans, and I therefore took leave of my Bedouin protector with regret. Such of my workmen as had remained faithful from the commencement, were rewarded with the present of a spade, or a trifling Arab coin. They had not anticipated such generosity, and were overwhelmed with gratitude and delight; Gunza almost cried through excess of joy, and exclaimed that, with the sum he had saved and what I then gave him, he would be able to pay a debt of fifteen shámies, and have, moreover, three to spare! As I mounted my horse, they hung round me, kissed my hands and garments, and clung sorrowfully to my stirrups. Hastily bidding them adieu, I cantered after the baggage. On turning round at some distance to take a last look at the mounds, I saw the party sitting on the ruins of the temple of Pharra,—and there they continued to sit until their diminishing forms were finally lost to my sight.

Azayiz and Hennayin being desirous of preferring some request to the Governor of Semáva on behalf of the Tuweyba tribe, accompanied me to the banks of the Euphrates. A great change was taking place in the aspect of the country; many old channels and watercourses, which I had been accustomed to see empty and dry, were now rapidly filling with river water. In many spots it reached up to my saddle-girths, proving the propriety of the step I had taken in ending the excavations. Within the space of a week, or less, passage

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in that direction, or indeed in any other, would have been impracticable. Hennayin, as he walked by my side, broke out into frequent exclamations of delight at the sight of little runners of the vivifying fluid as it trickled along, gradually filling the canals. "Is not this a beautiful country?" he continually exclaimed, while he looked up into my face with undoubted signs of gratification.

In anticipation of my return, two native vessels were engaged to convey my party and treasures to Busrah. The horses, mules, and grooms occupied one, while the antiquities were stowed away in the second, which carried myself and immediate attendants. While the embarkation was being effected, I was in full enjoyment of the scene before me. After the dust and barren dreariness of the ruins, nothing could exceed the beauty and luxury of that river side and its now verdant banks. The shouts and squabbles of the Arabs about the daily division of their pay were ceased, and in their stead bee-eaters, king-fishers, herons, pigeons, hawks, and other birds, in all their bright and varied plumage, were flying about, uttering their several cries, and luxuriating in their native element, scarcely deigning to notice the presence of human beings.

When all were embarked, I bade the Tuweyba chief and his brother-in-law adieu,—the cable was hauled in,—the sails set before a fair wind,—and, with a thousand invocations to God and Mohammed, my little fleet was wafted rapidly down the stream. The boats used by the natives for the navigation of the Mesopotamian rivers are huge clumsy craft, built of Indian teak, and of many tons burden. They have high sterns, with cabin and quarter-deck, from the top of which they are steered by a primitive rudder, composed of a complicated system of cross spars, roughly tied together. Here sits the captain,

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giving his orders and smoking his chibúk, during the livelong day, unless disturbed by unforeseen circumstances from his wonted calm; in which cases he rises, pipe in hand, and claims implicit obedience from his crew by the utterance of a torrent of abuse in richly-flowing Arabic, which is so admirably adapted to that purpose. Each vessel is supplied with a single tall mast, and huge square sail. In floating down the stream, or in sailing before a favourable breeze, the ungainly vessel goes glibly along; but when the wind is foul, or the course against the stream, the crew strip, flounder to the shore, and take the place of brute beasts at the tow-rope. The crew of an Arab vessel is an amphibious race—quite as much in the water as out of it. Deep streams have to be crossed, or shoals avoided in their tracking, and many an hour has to be spent in shoving their craft off a shallow sand-bank. The life of a Tigris "tracker" is as hard as can well be imagined.

Cleanliness is unknown in the cabin of an Arab vessel. The flooring, sides, and ceiling are begrimed with grease, and stained with smoke,—there is scarcely room to stand upright,—the boards are pierced with rats' holes, and small vermin issue from every crevice. Add to these annoyances, the incessant creaking of the unwieldy rudder and its appliances,—the intolerable noise made in tacking,—the frequent prayers to Mohammed for propitious winds and weather, mingled with wild songs without the slightest pretension to be called musical,—and it may be conceived that a stranger to the navigation of the Mesopotamian rivers passes a sleepless and disturbed first night on board an Arab vessel.

Fortunately the wind was favourable, so that we anchored at Súk-esh-sheioukh soon after midnight, by which arrangement there was a welcome cessation to, at least, the noisy portion of the annoyances. It was

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my intention to have paid my respects to the Sheikh of the Múntefik, and to have thanked him for the protection he had afforded me; but the captain desired to take advantage of the fair wind while he might. Quitting our anchorage at day dawn, we sailed at a merry rate down the Euphrates, and in two hours passed Umm-el-Buk—"the Mother of Mosquitoes"—the head of the vast inundation which from this point spreads out in every direction like a continuous sea. The channel of the Euphrates was only to be distinguished from the surrounding water by a narrow strip of bank, or by a line of date-trees along its margin. Here and there the flood might be seen rushing in a roaring cascade from the river into the marshes beyond it; at such points all the skill of the captain and crew was required to prevent our being carried through the break. Terrádas were busily employed in conveying the little property of the Arabs from their previous settlements, which were being speedily covered by the increasing waters. Throughout the day the same monotonous deluge presented itself; but we continued on our course without intermission, at midnight passing Korna, where the stream of the Tigris joins that of the Euphrates, and from whence their combined waters flow onwards to the Persian Gulf, under the name of the Shat-el-Aráb. A thick forest of luxuriant date-trees fringes the bank on either side of the noble river, which supplies innumerable canals for their nourishment, and for the cultivation of cereals, which flourish in large quantities even beneath the shade of the palms. The ebb and flow of the tide is perceptible twenty miles above Korna—quite eighty miles from the Persian Gulf.

At noon the following day, two of my horses were disembarked at the little village of Girdelán, opposite to the creek which flows to Busrah, and, with a single ser-

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vant, I rode across the desert to Mohammerah. The vessels meanwhile proceeded on their course to meet me in the Hafár canal, or branch of the Persian river Kárún, which flows past that city towards the Shat-el-Aráb.*

* The collection of antiquities, made during my second visit to Warka, was despatched from hence to England at the end of April 1850 ; and my report on the subject, accompanied by Mr Churchill's beautiful drawings and plans, was then likewise forwarded to the British Museum.

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CHAPTER XXII.

Mohammerah—Intense Heat—Sickness—Legion of Blood-suckers—Colony of Alexander the Great—Charax—The Delta of the Tigris and Euphrates—Disputes between the Turks and Persians—The Chá'b Arabs and their Territories.

THE camps of the Commissioners for the demarcation of the Turco-Persian frontier were pitched in the open desert, at the distance of a mile from the date-groves, where it was supposed they would be free from the miasma arising from the decomposition of noxious matter during the period of low tides. From the account given of Mohammerah by Captain Selby* in his Memoir on the Ascent of the Kárún in 1842, it was generally supposed to be an extremely healthy locality. The lengthened stay which the Commissions made on the spot proved, however, the contrary to be the case: continued sickness pervaded the whole four camps; food could not be retained upon the stomach long after a meal; and a general state of debility naturally ensued. This could not be attributed to the style of living; because each party followed its own customs:—the Russians took their little doses of cognac, and ate their national caviare,—the English abjured fruit, and the Orientals lived upon it. Captain Jones and the officers of the Nitocris, on their arrival each month from Bághdád, were seized with the same complaint; every meal saw

* Journal of Royal Geogr. Soc., vol. xiv., p. 223.

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some of our party obliged to make a precipitate retreat from the table; and yet no one was seriously ill.

Besides this curious endemic, there were other causes which rendered the region around Mohammerah by no means a desirable place of residence. The heat was intense, day and night,—in June rising to 124° Fahr. in the shade. It was of that peculiarly moist nature which prevails on the sea-coast of India, and more especially on the shores of the Persian Gulf, bathing the clothes in a continual state of perspiration. At Bághdád the heat is great; but, being uninfluenced by the moisture of the distant sea, the atmosphere is extremely dry, and the thermometer, consequently, much less affected than at Mohammerah. Another source of disquietude was the myriad of gigantic mosquitoes which about sunset issued from the date-groves, and made a violent onslaught upon the camps. We could hear them, in the distance, approaching with an intolerable buzz, and, in a few seconds afterwards, it was no uncommon sight to behold a party at dinner rush for protection to the confined atmosphere of the tents. No one could endure the virulence of their bites,—our light clothing was pierced instantaneously by their formidable probosces, and no earthly endurance could bear the torment inflicted at the same moment on the sensitive parts of the body. Gloves and boots were of no avail,—they bored through the former at once, and found their way over the tops of the latter. Resting at night was a sheer impossibility; under a net was the heat of an oven,—outside of it a legion of blood-suckers.

No wonder that all desired a speedy release from the miseries endured at this Ultima Thule of the frontier; but we were destined long to hope in vain.

Mohammerah owes its foundation, it is said, to Alexander the Great. In order to avoid the necessity of sailing

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down the Eulæus (the modern Kárún) to the Persian Gulf, and afterwards coasting up to the mouth of the Tigris, he caused an artificial cutting to be made between the two rivers, which is still to be recognised in the Hafár* now flowing past Mohammerah. Previously to this, the Kárún appears to have discharged its waters by one or both of the channels called Khor Kobbán and Khor Bahmeh-shír,† through a low promontory into the Persian Gulf. The site of Mohammerah was fixed at the junction of the Eulæus and Tigris upon the sea-shore. At this point Alexander built an artificial mound, and transferred to it a colony from the ruined Persian city of Durine, leaving a garrison of those soldiers who were unfit for service. He named the place Alexandria after himself, and the surrounding country was called Pellæum after the city where he was born. The town was afterwards destroyed by the invasion of the rivers, but was rebuilt by Antiochus, and hence called Antiochia. It was again ruined, as before, and a third time restored by an Arab king Spasines, son of Sogdonacus, who erected great dams, wharves, and causeways, calling it after himself, Charax of Spasines.

It was the birthplace of Dionysius the geographer, whom the Roman emperor Augustus sent to obtain information on the country for the instruction of his eldest son, who was about making an expedition to Armenia against the Parthians.

The province of Characine, whose capital was Charax, appears to have especially flourished under the dominion of the sub-Parthian kings. The British Museum possesses several remarkable copper coins referred to the kings of that province; they bear rude Greek legends, in

* "Hafár," in Arabic, means "digger."

† For further information on this point, I would refer the reader to the Journal of the Royal Geogr. Society, vol. xvi. p. 55, and Macdonald Kinnear, p. 293.

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connexion with busts of peculiar character, diadems, long peaked curled beards, and the enormous coiffures, so characteristic of remains from Warka.

Charax was named Kerkhi Misán, and Asterábád by the Sassanians, and Maherzi by the early Arabs.

The site is highly interesting in a geological as well as an historical point of view. It is an instance of an oceanic delta gaining, with almost unprecedented rapidity, upon the sea. According to the statement of Pliny,* the original site of Charax was two thousand paces from the shore, but, in consequence of the rapid accumulation of mud annually produced by the rivers, in the time of Juba II., king of Mauritania (25 B.C.), it stood fifty miles inland. There is, of course, much exaggeration in Pliny's information; but, if we take the trouble of comparing the historical accounts of the early Greek, Latin, and Mohammedan authors, the increase of land at the delta of the Tigris and Euphrates may be distinctly traced. Since the commencement of our era there has been an increment at the extraordinary rate of a mile in about seventy years, which far exceeds the growth of any existing delta. This rapid increase is accounted for by the deposit of the river mud in the confined basin of the gulf, where, instead of being washed away by currents, as in an open ocean, it is driven back by the returning tide, and formed into a gently shelving bank, perceptible at a considerable distance from the embouchure of the rivers. The comparatively recent formation of the country around Mohammerah is evident from the remains of fluviatile and marine shells, which occur abundantly upon a soil highly impregnated with saline efflorescences. These semi-fossils are identical with species now living in the adjacent rivers and in the Persian Gulf.

About the middle of the last century, when the Per-

* Liber vi. 27.

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sian empire was thrown into confusion by the assassination of the great Nádir Sháh, the Chá'b Arabs, from the marshes at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates, attacked the Persian tribe of Afshar, and eventually expelled them from their possessions on the estuary of the Shat-el-Arâb and Kárún. Kerím Khán, the successor of Nádir Sháh, after a fruitless attempt to regain the valuable territory, was compelled to abandon it to its new occupiers. Sheikh Salmán, the head of the Chá'b Arabs, aware of the importance of the position thus acquired, quickly raised a fleet, and long held his ground against both Turks and Persians, making piratical attacks on vessels in the Persian Gulf, among which he succeeded in capturing some British vessels. Tribute, or rather pishkásh (present), is, however, now exacted from the Chá'b, whenever the Sháh or his provincial governors possess sufficient force for the purpose, and the amount varies in ratio to the power exercised.

The value of Mohammerah as a commercial position was established by Sheikh Thámir, the great-grandson of Salmán, who opened it as a free port, thereby inflicting serious damage on the revenues of the Turkish customs at Busrah: hence arose the dispute concerning the place between the Turks and Persians. 'Alí Pasha finding his income considerably diminished, determined on attacking the enterprising sheikh; an expedition was consequently fitted out, and the town, with all its valuable contents, destroyed. The Persians being naturally under obligation to support the sheikh, and defend what they regarded as Persian soil, the dispute waxed warm between the two powers, and the chief of the Chá'b, meanwhile, assumed a very independent position, although nominally under the Turks. His place of residence was at Felláhíyya, but the custody of Mohammerah was consigned to Sheikh Ja'ber, who acted as his agent, and gradually acquired

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an enormous fortune. On the death of Sheikh Thámir, he was succeeded by his son Fáris, the present head of the Chá'b, and Sheikh Ja'ber has raised himself to be almost independent of his natural chief.

By the treaty of Erzerúm, however, it was agreed that Mohammerah should be finally made over to the Persians; but, on its being proposed, when the Commissioners met upon the spot, to carry out the spirit of the treaty, an unexpected difficulty presented itself. The Turkish Commissioner, in most lawyer-like manner, argued, like *Portia* in the *Merchant of Venice*,

> "This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood;
> The words expressly are, a pound of flesh.
> Then take thy bond—take thou the pound of flesh."

According to the letter of the deed, he was content to deliver up the town, but not an inch of the surrounding territory. Here, however, the similitude ended. Conference followed conference on this momentous question. Dervish Pasha stood his ground, and would consent to no other terms; whereupon Mírza Jáfér Khán instigated Sheikh Ja'ber to raise the Persian flag upon the walls of Mohammerah. Thus there was danger, at the very outset of the Commissioners' assembling, that the whole affair would fall to the ground, and bring about a recommencement of hostilities. Fortunately, European counsel was listened to; the obnoxious flag was removed, the point at issue referred to the four governments for decision, and it was ultimately resolved that a careful survey should be taken of the whole frontier line, and that all disputed questions should be left for future discussion.

In its present state, Mohammerah consists of a wretched assemblage of huts, containing about three hundred families, and is tolerably furnished with bazaars. On the settlement of the pending controversy, the place will,

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from its naturally advantageous position, soon become the great emporium of commerce between India, Turkey, and the south-western provinces of Persia; but, under the present aspect of affairs, there is little immediate prospect of its advancement.

Sheikh Ja'ber is a shrewd calculating Arab, far beyond his race in intelligence and civilization. Possessed of several vessels, he carries on an extensive trade with Muscat and Bombay, and can bring into the field a considerable force of horsemen and musketeers. His riches and influence are so great, that, in case of a misunderstanding with his superior, Sheikh Ja'ber would be a formidable rival for the chieftainship of the whole tribe.

The Chá'b Arabs are a tall, warlike race, with swarthy countenances, and an expression which denotes a strong infusion of Persian blood. In dress, they rather adopt the Persian than the Arab costume. The national black and white striped abba is thrown over the blue cotton tunic and short drawers of the Persian, while an ample black turban, tied in the peculiar fashion of Shúster and Dizfúl, shields the visage from the sun. Each man carries an immense long musket slung over his shoulder, a sword, and round target of tough bull's hide, studded with large copper nails or bosses. They are a brave, but cruel race, far inferior to the Bedouin in every manly and noble quality.

The district occupied by the Chá'b Arabs constitutes the largest part of the Persian province of Khúzistán, "the land of sugar"—the name being derived from the cultivation of that plant, which was extensively carried on here in former times. It is, however, usually denominated Arábistán, from its inhabitants.

The Chá'b* extend from the Persian Gulf, on the

* For a detailed account of this large tribe, consult Mr Layard's

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south, to an imaginary northern line, drawn from the Shat-el-Aráb above Busrah, to the Kárún, midway between Ahwáz and Ismaïlí, forming a junction with the tribes of the Beni Lám and Wálí of Háwíza,—thence the line follows the left bank of the Kárún, to a point above the village of Waïs. From this, the eastern boundary extends along the Zeytún Hills to the river Hindíyyán, and down its course to the sea. On the west, they possess a small strip of land upon the farther bank of the Shat-el-Aráb, from its mouth to near the town of Busrah.

During the early part of our mission, Khúzistán was governed by a Georgian Christian, named Suleyman Khán, whose justice and moderation rendered him a general favourite with all classes of his subjects. Notwithstanding their fanatical dispositions, and his despised religion, they were eloquent in his praise; and it spoke well for the feelings of all classes—from the Sháh to the Arab cultivator—that a Christian governor should be tolerated in the most fanatical of all Mohammedan countries. In my own intercourse, however, with the Persians, I did not always meet with the same toleration; and I can only account for their endurance of Suleyman Khán in consequence of his sterling qualities, and, above all, of the Sháh's supreme will.

admirable memoir "On the Province of Khúzistán," in the Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. xvi., p. 36, *et seq.*; and likewise Baron de Bode's "Travels in Lúristán and Arábistán," vol. ii., p. 110.

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CHAPTER XXIII.

Setting out for Susa—The Sulky Ferryman—Coffee-cups and Infidels—Ahwáz—A False Alarm—Shúster—Dilapidation and Dirt—Shápúr and the Captive Emperor Valerian—Their Grand Hydraulic Works—Festivities at Shúster—Tea—The Forbidden Beverage—Climate of Shúster—Failure in Diplomacy.

As soon as my collection of antiquities obtained at Warka was despatched to England, Colonel Williams desired me to visit Susa, and endeavour to make excavations at the mounds which are well known to exist at that locality. I was particularly instructed to be careful in my dealings with the natives, and to desist from any attempt at carrying out the project, if it were productive of opposition from any quarter. As the ruins had never been surveyed, it was desirable that a plan should be at once made, which might be turned to account in the event of researches being made on the spot. Mr Churchill, my companion on the previous journey through Mesopotamia, gladly availed himself of the permission accorded to him of joining me in the expedition, and I was only too delighted to take advantage of his knowledge of the language, and his agreeable society.

Letters were furnished me by the British and the Persian Commissioners to Suleyman Khán and the authorities at Shúster and Dizfúl—the two great Persian cities in the plains of Arábistán. Mírza Jáfér Khán likewise sent one of his own gholáms to guide, and

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to ensure us a certain degree of respect from his countrymen. Thus provided we once more bid adieu to our friends, and set out on our travels, delighted beyond measure to escape from the feverish heat and debilitating atmosphere of Mohammerah.

In order to avoid the intensity of the sun, it was necessary to start early, so as to rest for a few hours at noon, and again resume the journey when the heat had somewhat abated. Our general course was north-easterly, along the banks of the Kárún, but, during our first day's ride, we only touched upon it at a single point, and again took the direct route, sleeping at night upon the arid floor of the desert. On the following morning we once more reached the river at a ruined tomb called Imám Sebá', enshrouded in a deep grove of date-trees; the banks of the Kárún being also fringed with a thick forest of fine tamarisks, which gradually sloped to the river brink.

At mid-day we arrived opposite to the Arab village of Ismaïlí, where a ferry-boat is established for passengers. Whether the Arabs were taking their siesta, or whether they were indisposed to move instantaneously at the beck of every traveller who might present himself at the water's edge, it is difficult to say, but, notwithstanding all our shouting, threats, entreaties, and firing of pistols, the Charon of Ismaïlí refused to appear. Having no other alternative but to wait the pleasure of that worthy, an awning was hastily raised, under which we fell asleep to while away the time. Patience always has its reward; so in this case, after waiting four hours, a man paddled over the stream in a small boat to ascertain what we wanted, although he might have heard every word spoken by us on the opposite side. A messenger was then sent across to the sheikh to say that we carried letters from the Elchi (ambassador) at Mohammerah to the governor of the province, and that the ferry-boat must be sent over

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without farther delay. After levelling some abuse at Christians, Charon at length appeared with a large hulk, into which the baggage was tumbled, ourselves taking up a position on the top of the pile. The horses and mules swam the river, and the whole party was soon landed in safety on the left bank below the village.

The sheikh probably thought he had carried his disrespect too far, and now came out on a beautiful mare to receive his guests; but we took no notice of him. Not until we had made all the necessary arrangements about the pitching of our tents and disposal of the baggage, did we deign to tell him, in the hearing of his people, that the elchi should be informed of our uncourteous reception. His excuse was that he was not aware we were waiting for the boat, and that the ferryman could not be found. After several refusals, we at length condescended to accompany him to his hut. We were then conducted to a dirty yard, where, under the scanty shade of a few boughs, sat a party of filthy Cha'b, unwilling to shew the slightest respect to the Christian strangers until the sheikh requested them to rise. Then, and then only, they made a feint of getting up from their greasy mats. Coffee was made and handed in a cracked cup, with a large piece out of the edge, from which we both drank. It had been purposely chosen, for no sooner was it carried to the door than it was broken to pieces, being pronounced "nedjis," "unclean" from having touched our infidel lips! It was impossible to resist the temptation of saying that washing would have had equal effect, and that then the expense of a new cup would have been spared to the sheikh's pocket! Such was our reception by our first Persian hosts.

Our third day's journey extended to Ahwáz; during it we caught the first glimpse of the distant mountains, with their continuous undulating line, void of peaks or

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of any prominent features; but the breeze which blew from them was cool and invigorating. As we now quitted the saliferous alluvium of the lower plains, and entered upon the gravel and sandstone beds of the tertiary rocks, a considerable change was perceptible in the character of the vegetation; the tamarisk was becoming less plentiful, and its place was occupied by large bushes of the sidr, or konár, with its pretty red berries. The soil, too, was covered with widely scattered blades of scorched yellow grass; and on the bank of the Kárún, about two miles from Ahwáz, were four large trees, resembling the oak in form, and fifty feet high. They bore small oval, tough, leaves, and were in full bloom, with large yellow flowers resembling a foxglove, but much larger, and referable to Tetrandria Monogynia. I gathered several specimens for my herbarium, but, before I could overtake the caravan, the heat destroyed them. The same species of tree never again occurred to me, nor was I ever able to ascertain its native name.

Sheikh Ibbára, of Ahwáz, shewed himself to be more civilized and hospitable than the cup-breakers at Ismaïlí.

Ahwáz is situated on the left bank of the Kárún at the base of a range of reddish sandstone and gravel-conglomerate hills, which bear in a south-east direction towards Zeytún. This range is the principal outlier of the great mountains, and may likewise be traced in the opposite direction across the Kárún towards Háwíza, and from thence to the east of Mendelí. It finally rises into a considerable range called the Hamrín, and crosses the Tigris below the junction of the Little Záb with the larger river.

Ahwáz is celebrated for the massive bund, or dam, which, below the town, obstructs the free navigation of the river. This bund is a natural barrier formed by the continuation of the sandstone beds of the range above

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mentioned, further strengthened and enlarged by an artificial wall, portions of which are still remaining entire, while the remainder has been washed away by the force of the stream. One of the three openings was navigated by Captain Selby in the H.E.I.C. steam-vessel Assyria, but the others are shallow. The artificial masonry was doubtless erected for the purpose of diverting a portion of the stream into canals on either side above the bund, which acted as the bank of a reservoir, and raised the water to the required level. Above the town is the dry bed of a wide, ancient canal, called Náhr-el-Bahára, which flowed past Felláhíyya and joined the river Jerráhí at Bender. Its bed is now a corn-field. When the artificial dam existed, and there was a superabundance of water in the reservoir, it was got rid of by means of tunnels cut through the rocks on the left bank, which again conveyed it to the main stream below the bund. Here, on the right bank, is another dry channel, supposed by some travellers to be the mouth of the river Eulæus, by which Alexander the Great sailed from Susa to the sea.

The ancient city of Aginis is said to have occupied the site of Ahwáz. Extensive ruins occur along the base of the sandstone range, and are reported to extend a distance of two days' journey. In the ascent from the modern town are to be seen a number of fallen columns, quarried from the stone of the neighbourhood, and a quantity of debris from various decayed edifices. The solid rock, at some period or another, has been cut in many places, and the remains of excavated chambers are abundant. Wherever an abrupt surface of rock is exposed, it has been rudely scarped and ornamented. In all directions are rock tombs, accessible by means of steps, and due to a period anterior to the Arab conquest of Persia; but at the base of the rocks are sepulchres

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of later date—large stone slabs lie horizontally on the ground, ornamented with a Saracenic arch, and having at the lower extremity a small channel to allow the rain to escape from the surface. Around the arch are much-weathered Kúfic inscriptions. From the highest point of the range, the view of these burial places has a remarkably curious effect, and is well worthy of the traveller's attention.

From Ahwáz our next stage was to Bender-ghíl, passing by the way the small Arab village of Waïs, where the whole population was busily engaged with the harvest; men and boys, cows and donkeys were assiduously treading out the corn, of which there was an abundant supply. Above Waïs the Kárún flows through a light alluvial soil, admirably suited for the cultivation of grain, although it is to be doubted if the farmers of Waïs were aware of the fact.

The river Kárún is divided at Shúster into two branches, which again meet at Bender-ghíl after a course of about thirty miles. The eastern branch is called the A'b-í-Gargar, and flows in a milk-white stream through an artificial channel. The western branch is the original bed of the river, and takes the appellation of Shuteyt; the colour of its stream is reddish, and its velocity greater than the A'b-í-Gargar. At Bender-ghíl, likewise, is the mouth of the Dizfúl river, which pours its red, turbid waters into the Shuteyt, leaving a deposit of red mud below the village, upon the island formed by the two streams of the Kárún. For a considerable distance below the junction of the rivers, the milky water of the A'b-í-Gargar refuses to mingle cordially with its fellows; but, before arriving at Waïs, the Kárún has partaken of the turbid character of the Diz, which it retains throughout the remainder of its course to the sea.

Bender-ghíl is a wretched place, containing forty

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houses, entirely supported by the traffic produced by its ferry—little enough in all conscience. From hence our route lay over a pretty undulating country. A ripe grass of rich golden hue clothed the surface, which was plentifully studded with green konár trees, affording not only a deep contrast for the eye, but a welcome shade for the whole person of the traveller. Espying a large mound on our right hand, we made a detour to visit it, under the impression that it was portion of the ruins said to stand on the bank of the A'b-í-Gargar. We were, however, mistaken in our surmise, and had the trouble of wading through roughly-ploughed ground, which yielded an abundant crop of prickly thistles, making ourselves and horses wince with pain. While carefully picking our way through the army of lances opposing our progress, a black flag was suddenly hoisted on our right, and, shortly afterwards, a strong party of horsemen with large tufted spears advanced to meet us from one direction, while, from another, a little army of half-naked Anafíyya Arabs, who occupy the island, cut off our retreat; the latter were armed with swords and guns slung over their tawny shoulders, and came on rapidly, preceded by a man carrying a piece of black tenting on a pole. Yells and war-dances were rendered exquisite by the additional excitement imparted by the thistles. It afterwards appeared that they were in daily expectation of an attack from their mountain neighbours, the Bakhtiyárí, and, seeing us upon the mound far away from the beaten track, they made certain their enemies were upon them. How surprised they must have been to meet two peaceful Englishmen with umbrellas instead of muskets in their hands! The horsemen, were, of course, first to reach us; they were all well armed with spear and leathern shield, and presented an imposing and picturesque front as they rode up, on valuable

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mares, headed by their sheikh Husséyn and his big-tufted spear. Notwithstanding the unnecessary alarm we had occasioned them, he gave us a kindly welcome, and rode back with us to his camp. One of the Arab party was questioned as to the force his tribe could muster, when he readily answered, "nine hundred foot-men and three hundred horse." Then riding up to the sheikh's side, he asked if he had replied satisfactorily. "Yes, pretty well!" said Husséyn; "you might have said more, but never mind, it will do tolerably well." The fact was, that a third of the number would have been ample! We encamped during the heat of the day within a few yards of his tent, and received from the sheikh the present of a lamb, in proof of his friendship and goodwill.

A further ride of three short hours brought the party to Imám Káf-'Alí, a whitened sepulchre on a little elevation, which overlooks the town of Shúster with its mosque and numerous tombs of holy men—all painted white, and contrasting in the most marked degree with the piles of rubbish and filth around them. The most distant object is the old castle overlooking the Shuteyt, and the nearest is a series of gardens, partially concealing low mounds and ruins, the remains of a more ancient city. The first sight of Shúster is by no means an interesting or beautiful scene, for, even in the distance, ruin and decay are the principal features, affording too correct a picture of its wretched condition.

The precincts of the place are entered from the south by the Púlí Lascar, whose low arches span a dry canal; near it we were introduced to the tomb of Imám-záda Abdúlla, one of the most extraordinary specimens of ugly, mis-shapen architecture which any Mohammedan city can produce. Its squat building was surmounted by an enormously elongated cone, resembling a huge ex-

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tinguisher. On either side was a tall minaret, with gallery to the summit, giving it the appearance of a large candlestick with the candle just burned to the socket. To render them more conspicuous, the prominent features were glaring white.

The town appeared as though an earthquake had recently occurred, the bazaars, once so famous, were deserted, and the houses were apparently in the act of falling on the inhabitants, many being merely heaps of bricks. Ruin! ruin! ruin! was the prevailing character of the Persian seat of government in Arábistán, which presented a worse picture of depopulation than either Bághdád or Busrah. But there had been no earthquake, no recent attack from the foe; what we saw was the result of continued misgovernment, over-taxation, and internal feuds. Shúster is the abode of many noble families, constantly drawing the sword upon each other. Every quarter has its own chief, who is surrounded by his followers, ready at any moment to attack their neighbours. The influence of the Persian government is only maintained by keeping up a feeling of hostility among the various clans—for so the different parties may be called. Frequently, however, the antagonism, which it seeks to promote, is turned against its own lieutenant, and the governor of Arábistán is at times obliged to defend himself *vi et armis*, or by an ignominious flight. No great outbreak had occurred for the previous three years, so that we saw the city on its best behaviour, with a disposition to be tranquil, until some unexpected and unforeseen circumstance should arise to fan the latent fire. Persian cities generally are not remarkable for cleanliness; but of all that the traveller ever visits, Shúster—and, I may add, Dizfúl—are the *ne plus ultra* in this respect. Dogs are, of course, the scavengers in all Oriental towns; but they decline to

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cleanse the streets of the twin capitals of Arábistán! Spouts, projecting half-way across the narrow lanes, discharge the night soil from the house tops. There the foul mass lies unnoticed, contaminating the air, and diffusing fevers, cholera, and disease, being only removed by the heavy rains of spring, or thrown to one side and covered with fresh earth on the arrival of some great visitor whom it delights the governor thus to honour! It is impossible to walk through the streets; and, in riding, good navigation is required to escape the down-pourings from the spouts!

Indigo is much cultivated at Shúster and Dizfúl; hence it is that the prevailing colour worn by the natives is blue. Blue cotton tunics girded round the waist with a shawl; shalwás, or trousers, of the same colour and material; and tawny complexions, well stained with the dye, meet one at every corner. The usual culláh, or tall lamb-skin cap of the Persian, is seldom worn here; but the ordinary head-dress of the people consists of a long piece of black stuff wound round the brow, one end being puckered up in front, like the feather of a Highlander's bonnet, while the other hangs down the back, in imitation of the streamers which were used by the Parthians and Sassanians. Excepting a thick felt skull-cap, and short drawers which cover the hips and thighs, boys run about entirely naked. The countenances of the inhabitants are not prepossessing;—low cunning, deceit, and mistrust being universal among the lower classes. These towns are the gathering-places of priests and Seyids, or descendants of the Prophet, the fanatical expression of whose features — overshadowed by white and green turbans in ample folds — proclaims intense bigotry and hatred of all races, sects, and religions but their own. The aristocracy, however, boasts of some well-informed and liberal men, whom it would be unfair to include among

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the vulgar herd. The hospitality and attention displayed by them during our three days' stay left a favourable impression on our minds, which was not effaced during subsequent visits.

Of the primitive history of Shúster we know nothing, researches not having been made in the surrounding ruins. By some authors it is regarded as the site of "Shushan the Palace," where the stirring scenes connected with the life of Esther are stated to have taken place. These, however, as will be hereafter seen, certainly occurred at Shúsh. The town of Shúster appears to have risen into importance at a period coincident with the decline of the great capital of the Persian kings; and the modern name "Shúster," or "Little Shúsh," indicates its phœnix-like birth from the ruins of the greater city, Shushan. However this may be, it was undoubtedly at the height of its power in the time of Shápúr, the second monarch of the Sassanian line, A.D. 242–273. History tells us, that when Shápúr advanced from Persia to wrest the Western Provinces of Asia from the hands of the Romans, the Emperor Valerian, in attempting to relieve Edessa, was taken prisoner. Shápúr, with the cruelty of the Eastern character, during seven years insulted and degraded his fallen foe, using him as a footstool to mount on horseback. At length, after a continuance of unheard-of cruelties, the captive's eyes were plucked out, and his skin—flayed from his body—was dressed, died red, and stuffed, in which condition it was carried about with the conqueror, and exhibited as a trophy of his greatness! To Valerian's captivity and genius Shúster is in an eminent degree indebted. The existing remains of magnificent specimens of engineering skill, far surpassing anything of the kind in Persia at the present day, are attributed to him. It forms no part of my intention to describe these remarkable hydraulic

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works in detail, because this has been carefully done elsewhere ;* but it may not be uninteresting to give a short description of them for the information of the general reader.

The Kárún, just before reaching the town of Shúster, after striking against a high cliff of sandstone and gravel conglomerate, makes an abrupt turn to the west, passing close under the foot of the castle rock. Beyond this is the Bund-í-Mizán—a massive dam of hewn stone blocks, fastened with iron cramps, and thrown completely across the wide, deep, and rapid stream of the Kárún. The admirable nature of this dam is evident from its having borne the rush of the torrent during so many centuries. This bund not only acts as the wall of a reservoir, but serves as a foundation for a bridge of enormous length. Probably no portion of Valerian's original structure now exists at this bund, with the exception of some massive pier-bases. The bridge itself has repeatedly given way in various places, and now presents a complete patch-work of Persian ingenuity in architecture. Three of the centre arches had fallen the winter before our visit, and lay obstructing the passage of the water over the bund—to all appearance likely to lie there until the force of the current should wash them away! Of the arches remaining, thirty-six were large and twenty small—built in every style, from the high to the low pointed arch. On the north side, below the bridge, are the remains of several water-mills, to which the water is diverted by excavations in the solid rock. The gravel cliffs here are hollowed out in every direction for serdábs, or cellars, many of which are of sufficient size to accommodate a large caravan. Pillars of the rock are left to support the

* I must refer to Sir Henry Rawlinson's and Mr Layard's valuable papers, in the Royal Geographical Society, for a full and historical account of these extraordinary works. Vol. ix., p. 73 ; vol. xvi., p. 27.

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roof; but huge blocks, lying in the bed of the river attest that they have fallen from their places by being too much undermined.

The object of the Bund-í-Mizán was twofold:—to form a foundation for the bridge, and to accumulate a sheet of water before the castle for the delectation of its possessor, who, like all Persians, was, doubtless, partial to the sight —if not to the touch—of water.

But Valerian's or Sháṕur's great work was the cutting of the great channel, through which the A'b-í-Gargar, or eastern branch of the Kárún, flows, which was effected at the point where the main stream of the Kárún is, as I have said, deflected from its previous course above the town. Here a cutting was made to the depth of seventy feet through the natural rock, and carried to a distance, which I am unable to state, from the bed of the original channel. Into this cutting the stream was admitted; but, as it must otherwise have abstracted the greater part of the river, a solid and well-built wall, supported by strong buttresses of hewn stone, was built across the mouth of the canal. To withstand the force of the stream, when flooded, the dam was supplied with external round buttresses, admirably adapted to the purpose. The water, admitted through several sluices in the stone-work, may be regulated at pleasure. The name applied to this massive dam is a self-evident proof of its being originally designed and constructed by the captive emperor: it is called Bund-í-Kaysar, or Cæsar's* dam. It is likewise frequently named Bund-í-Sháh-záda,† from having been repaired or strengthened by a late prince-governor of Kirmánsháh.

* *Cæsar*, as every person knows, was the title assumed by all the Roman emperors after Julius Cæsar, in the same manner as *Pharaoh* was applied to the Egyptian monarch.

† Sháh-záda means Prince; literally "Son of a king."

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At the distance of about half-a-mile below this ancient work is another bund, of probably more recent construction, even more solid and substantial than the one just described. It communicates with the suburb of Boleïtí, and is hence called Púlí Boleïtí, being seventy paces long, twelve paces wide, and nearly as high as the cliffs on either side. The water, conveyed through the rock at the sides, falls about twenty feet into the artificial channel below, working, in its course, numerous wheels, which daily grind immense quantities of barley. There does not, probably, exist throughout the East a single city at which so much labour has been expended in distributing a proper supply of water to its dependencies as at Shúster. The interior of the town is provided for by two canals, pierced through the castle rock.

Between the Bund-í-Kaysar and the Bund-í-Mizán, the bed of the Kárún is said to be paved with stone, and called the Shádarawán.

With the exception of the bunds and foundations of the great bridge, there do not appear to be at Shúster any buildings existing of earlier date than the Mahommedan era, although M. Court* mentions a relic of Sassanian origin at the castle gateway, but which no other modern traveller has yet seen.

Suleyman Khán, the governor of the province, to whom our letters were addressed, was absent at Ram Hormúzd collecting tribute, and preparing to send an expedition against the great Bakhtiyárí chief, Jáfér Kúlí Khán, who had taken refuge in his inaccessible mountain fortress—the Diz—and defied all the forces of Persia. We were, however, received by his secretary Hadjí Mahommed 'Alí, and Mírza Súltán 'Alí Khán, the governor of the town for the time being, who, as well as the other great men of the place, treated us to a series of

* Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bombay, No. xxxv., p. 560.

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festivities, which, if not quite in accordance with European taste, at least shewed a disposition to honour their visitors after their own fashion. The following was the style of entertainment dispensed to us by the governor, whose residence was one of the most pleasantly situated, and one of the largest in the town. It stood on the edge of the cliff overlooking the A'bí-Gargar—a huge block of lofty walling, with here and there a small grated window, more useful for the discharge of bullets during an *emeute* than for the admission of light or air. It had two entrances, the principal of which was a deep oval recess, decorated at the top with Arabesque ornaments usual in such positions, and supplied with stone seats, where the owner of the mansion "sat in the gate," after the mode of Orientals in all ages, hearing the news and discussing the various questions of the day amid a respectful circle of visitors and attendants. Rising at our approach, he conducted us through a spacious court, containing in the centre a large tank full of water, up a narrow staircase in one corner, to an upper story, where was a second but smaller court, surrounded on three sides by plain walls—the fourth, next the river, containing an iwán, or arched chamber, open at one extremity—a never-failing adjunct to Persian houses.

In the centre of the court was a small garden with a few stunted specimens of vegetation, and in front of the iwán was a small reservoir—also an indispensable necessary to Persian keyf—in which two very curious jets were made to play in an extremely comical manner by the pressure of water, raised from the river to the top of the house. This was effected by means of a creaking piece of machinery and leathern buckets, driven by an obstinate mule, which, to the no small amusement of my companion and myself, every now and then turning restive, caused the cessation of the fountains through lack of the needful supply.

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We were soon duly seated upon one of those magnificent carpets which excite the admiration of all travellers in that country. Mírza Súltán 'Alí Khán was very gracious as we explained to him the object of our proposed visit to Shúsh, and the nature of the information likely to be derived from excavating in its mounds. He quite comprehended us, and became warm on the conquests of Key Káwús, and the magnificence of Khussrev; but when, as a matter of course, he struck into the everlasting theme of Persian recitation—the Sháh-náma of Ferdúsi—there seemed a probability that his excitement would outdo his hospitality. The name of Shúsh acted like magic on a knot of green-turbaned gentry who sat with us, and the whispering that succeeded proved them to be jealous and doubtful of our real intentions; but of this we took no heed. Kaliyúnes, or water pipes, were first duly served by ganymedes with sombre headdress, and hand upon heart; then ensued a general hubble-bubbling, as if it were part of every man's avocation in life to inhale the smoke of tobacco and charcoal into his lungs with the greatest possible noise. After this came tea—not the stuff sold in English grocers' shops, which produces astringency enough to convert the surface of the tongue into a rasp—but pure and undefiled chaï, brought overland through Russia, and whose flavour gives one some idea of the delicious infusion which, alas! we in England know not of. Russian overland tea, in Persia, takes the place which Arab coffee assumes in Turkey, and no old lady in the land of the west can sip her dish of fragrant tea with more relish than does the Persian gentleman. There, the greater the pile of sugar put into the cup, the greater is the honour paid to the guest. Succeeding to a surfeit of tea-syrup came a second edition of kaliyún, after which we underwent the categorical examination of the green turbans for so long a time that

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I confess to having entirely lost the use of my nether extremities from cramp. We had gone to breakfast with the governor at an hour he had himself named, but, time slipping rapidly away, it became questionable whether our host had not forgotten the invitation, or whether we had misunderstood him. Three huge trays at length entered the court on men's heads, which prepared us for a sumptuous repast; my readers may judge our disappointment and horror when, at mid-day, without previously eating anything, we found that the trays placed before us contained literally nothing but green cucumbers and sour apricots—the symbols of cholera, as we had been accustomed to regard them! However, there was no retreat, so, putting a good face on the matter, we duly washed our hands and set to with the best possible grace. We both fortunately survived that day! After the banquet came a washing of hands in the water tank with the comical jets, another course of kaliyúns, and finally a cup of coffee, which completed this great entertainment and permitted our departure with decorum. The governor accompanied us to the door of his house, and we rode to our tents by the river side to get "something to eat!"

This was a specimen of the ordinary fêtes, but we sometimes had enough, and much more than enough, of chilaw, and pilaw, and lamb stuffed with rice, almonds, and raisins; vegetables swimming in oil, and an infinity of compounds, which it is impossible to enumerate, and which only a hungry traveller can truly appreciate. Tea and sherbet were our only drink during these visits, but, for all that, it must not be supposed that Persians do not tipple. I well remember a subsequent stay at Shúster, when, in addition to one of sherry, a bottle of brandy was placed on the table of the Commission, after a long day's journey in a pouring rain. The governor's brother entered, in his usual sedate manner, and took a

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seat. He desired to know the contents of the bottles; a glass of sherry was poured out, which he drank, and pronounced "khúb!" "good!" A second was "khilé khúb! bísíar khúb!" "extremely good!"—but he asked to taste of the other bottle. That was "beh! beh! beh!" Then he tried a glass of sherry, then a glass of brandy. Finally, he seized both bottles, and mixed the liquors in the same glass; nor did he desist until the whole contents had disappeared. Not content with this, he asked for more, but this was, of course, refused him. He was ultimately supported from the room by an old domestic, who exhibited great concern that ghyáwrs should see his master in his cups. We afterwards learned that, previously to joining our party, he had imbibed eleven glasses of raw 'arak! An oriental has no idea of temperance in his potations; he thinks that there is little pleasure in a single glass: accordingly, when he drinks, he does so to excess.

During the summer, the intensity of the heat compels the people of Shúster to retire into their serdábs, or under-ground apartments, during the day, and to emerge at sunset to sleep upon their terraces. These serdábs are cut out of the solid rock, and supplied with flues or shafts, which, rising above the houses like ornamental chimneys, produce a free current of air. Without serdábs, it would be almost impossible to exist in the hot, drying wind, which more resembles the blast from a furnace, than the air of the habitable earth.

In the absence of Suleyman Khán, we were more especially the guests of Hadjí Mahommed 'Alí, who would not permit anything to be cooked by our own people, insisting that whatever we required should be sent from his kitchen. In fact, during our stay, all parties vied with each other in their attentions towards us.

With letters to the Governor of Dizfúl, to aid and

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assist our plans at Shúsh, we took leave of our new friends. Two small kéleks supplied the place of the broken bridge, by means of which our baggage was conveyed to the western bank of the Shuteyt, where it was necessary to pass the night, so as to make a good start at daybreak. On quitting Shúster a liberal present was left for the servants of Hadjí Mahommed 'Alí, in return for his hospitality. It was, however, sent back, with a message "that the Hadjí would not permit it; were we not the Hadjí's guests, and should his servants receive presents on that account, although it was a Persian custom? It was a bad example;—they would expect the same from the next Englishman who chanced to pass that way." Soon afterwards, the major-domo of the Hadjí presented himself with a low bow, and a pretended message from his master to the intent that, "if it were the custom of our country to give bákhshish on departure, he would for once permit us to do so!" Another low bow from the messenger, who bore all the appearance of a convicted thief! He tried a clever trick, but, finding the Firenghís too deep for him, was obliged to slink off without the much-coveted keráns, evidently disgusted at the unsuccessful termination of his diplomacy.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

Departure from Shúster—Change of Scenery and Animal Life—Huge Lizards—Botany—Geology of the Persian Steppes—Sháh-ábád—Dizfúl—Subterranean Conduits—Costume of the People—The 'Alí Kethír Guide—The Bridge of the Diz—Encampment at Shúsh—A Conflagration.

On first leaving the bank of the Kárún, the road to Dizfúl traverses some small ridges of gravel conglomerate, the alteration in the geological features of the country being accompanied by a corresponding change in animal and vegetable life. Clinging to the rocks, basking in the hot sun, or fleetly pursuing smaller reptiles, were numerous huge lizards (Psammosaurus scincus) lashing their long tails, and opening their capacious black jaws. Our gholám exhibited his skill as a rider and sportsman, in shooting one of these creatures for examination. They live chiefly on snakes, which they pounce on suddenly, shake as a terrier does a rat, and cranch from tail to head; then they suck the mangled body down their throats, somewhat after the manner of a Neapolitan swallowing his national maccaroni! I once saw a lizard of this species attack, kill, and attempt to swallow a serpent six feet long. After gulping for a length of time to get down the tip end of its victim's tail, which hung out of its mouth, it disgorged its meal, repeated the process of mastication, and, ultimately, after some hard gasping, succeeded in overcoming its difficulty.

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Then, for the first time, we encountered the delicately-plumed rock partridge (Perdix petrosa, Lath.), fraternizing with its velvet-breasted relative of the lower plains, the common francolin—the favourite of the sportsman. In botany, the tamarisk and the camel's thorn were replaced along the margin of the streams by the poisonous oleander, with its elegant pink flowers. I here also first observed a large shrub, 7 feet high, called "kalableb," which bore a large white flower; the stem was full of a milky juice, bitter to the taste, and said to burn like caustic. There was likewise a large plant, bearing a leaf much resembling rhubarb, and a bunch of deep-red flowers, which produces an oval green, fleshy, spiked syncarpous fruit, longitudinally divided into four parts, each containing three rows of white juicy berries, of agreeable flavour, resembling the walnut. They are largely collected by the Arabs for food. At Dizfúl, I heard the plant called by an Arab, "Dendrorhú;" it is named by the Turks, "Aráb khozí," or Arab nut.*

With the above exceptions, vegetation was already dead throughout the undulating gravel ridges. It was now only the 19th of May, and yet the grass was scorched to a bright yellow, which, with the deep red of the gravel itself, gave to the imagination a vivid idea of the intense heat reigning in that region three months later in the season. The temperature was high, but it was perfectly delightful compared with the furnace we had recently quitted at Mohammerah. A fresh invigorating breeze every now and then blew from the adjoining mountains, along the base of which our route lay, giving some conception of the delights in store for us as soon as we might

* Since the above was written, I have ascertained, through Mr Bennett of the British Museum, that this plant is the Glossostemon Bruguieri of Desfontaines, described and figured in Mem. du Mus. Hist. Nat. tom. III., p. 238, pl. 11. It does not appear to have been met with since the time of Bruguier, in 1797.

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quit the burning plains. Having passed so many months upon the unpicturesque level of the Arab deserts, the approach to the mountains of Lúristán was hailed by my companion and myself with unspeakable delight. The anticipation of ere long reaching some of those snow-crowned crests far surpassed the positive reality when we had attained the summit of our wishes.

The great range, distant thirty miles from our road, attains an elevation of eight or ten thousand feet above the sea, and bears in a general direction towards the north-west. Its rocky masses belong entirely to the cretaceous and lower tertiary series, rising in huge, elongated saddles of compact, altered limestone parallel to each other. At intervals, where the elevating force, which produced the present configuration of this region, has acted with extreme intensity, the continuity of the beds became broken, and masses of rock were left standing isolated with precipitous escarpments, presenting retreats accessible only to the savage inhabitants. "Diz" is the name applied to natural fortresses of this kind, which frequently bear on their summits acres of rich grass, and springs of delicious water, whither a native chief with his adherents can retire in safety in times of need, and defend their difficult passes with a handful of men against the whole power of the Persian government itself. Superimposed on the harder limestone rocks are beds of a softer nature—marls, rivalling the coloured sands of our own Isle of Wight in their brilliant and variegated aspect,—vast piles of amorphous gypsum dazzling the eye with its excessive whiteness,—and successive layers of red sands alternating with gravel. These formations follow the contortions of the harder crystalline limestones, lie at extraordinary angles on the slopes of the saddles, and fill up the hot, feverish valleys between them.

Wherever the highlands of Persia are approached from

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the plains of Mesopotamia the same formidable barrier of mountains presents itself. To attain the high level of that garden of roses, which the Persian poet loves to descant on, it is necessary to climb the successive ridges by roads scarcely better than goat tracks, which regular gradation of ascents is appropriately described by the Greek historians as κλίμακες, or *ladders*. All the great rivers, which flow from the east into the Tigris have their sources in these mountains, crossing diagonally through the intricacies of the chain. Instead of flowing in a south-east direction along the trough which separates two parallel limestone saddles, and by this means working out its channel in the soft rocks of the gypsiferous and marly series, and rounding the extremity of the saddle where it dips under the overlying deposits, each of these rivers takes a direction at right angles to its former course, and passes directly through the limestone range by means of a "tang," or gorge, apparently formed for this express purpose. On reaching the next succeeding gypsum trough, it follows its original south-east course for a short distance, and again crosses the next chain in the same manner, until it attains the verdant plains of Assyria or Susiana. Many of these tangs expose a perpendicular section of one thousand feet and upwards, and were formed, not by the scooping process which attends river action, but by natural rents produced by the tension of the crystalline mass at the period of its elevation. Of these fissures the rivers have taken advantage and shortened their otherwise circuitous channels.

I must not, however, fatigue my readers with a geological account of regions which we are not about to enter.*

* For a detailed geological description of these highly interesting mountains I must refer the reader to my lengthy memoir, "On the Geology of Portions of the Turko-Persian Frontier and the Districts adjoining," in vol. xi. p. 247 of the "Quarterly Journal of the Geological Society."

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Between Shúster and Dizfúl we spent one night upon the journey at the little village of Sháh-ábád (King's abode). There is nothing to remark concerning this place, except that it is built upon the ruins of Jundí-Shápúr, a city which attained some celebrity during the late Sassanian and early Mohammedan eras, but which ultimately succumbed to the better positions of its neighbouring rivals, Shúster and Dizfúl. Low mounds and ramparts, scarcely distinguishable from the surrounding plain, are all that now remain; these are ploughed over the surface, and yield to the inhabitants rich crops of grain.

From hence, a ten miles' ride brings the traveller to the gates of Dizfúl, over a rough road strewed with large rounded blocks of limestone, mingled with coarse gravel. The surrounding husbandry is brought to perfection by means of periodical rains, which fall in tropical abundance from December to the end of March; but villages near to the base of the mountains are supplied with water through konáts, or under-ground channels, conveyed from the river of Dizfúl. In nothing is the industry of the Persian more obvious than in the formation of these subterranean conduits. Upon the high plains of the interior, where frequently no visible moisture exists on the surface, an under-ground gallery is run diagonally towards some neighbouring range, and continued until the filtration of numerous little driblets, or runners, accumulates into a sufficiently copious stream. Many of these konáts extend for miles, and are traceable by little piles of earth and gravel, thrown out of rázúnas, or skylights, at regular intervals. In some parts, the cultivation of the crops entirely depends on the water flowing from konáts. Isfahán itself is, to a certain extent, supplied with the valued fluid through konáts, which convey streams from near Khonsár, and swell the

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little river Zenderúd, as it flows to the former capital of Persia.

There is nothing enticing in the first view of Dizfúl, from any direction—bare mud walls and white mosques being the prevailing features. It is situated on the left bank of the river of Diz, which rushes in a deep channel through cliffs of gravel conglomerate. If the external aspect of the place is not inviting, much less so is the interior. The houses, like those of Shúster, are built chiefly of sandstone, with serdábs below cut out of the solid rock. The streets are, if possible, in a worse state of filth than the neighbouring city, and the stench arising from them is perfectly sickening; but, as a counterbalance, there is an air of greater prosperity about the place; the bazaars, miserable in themselves, are better supplied, and the houses are in a tolerable state of repair.

Dizfúl is the Manchester of these regions. The banks of the river afford employment to hundreds of persons at the dyeing stoves. Indigo was introduced from Isfahán, a few years ago, by the Mú'temedu-'d-dowlet—the uncle of Suleyman Khán, and it is now largely cultivated in the neighbourhood, as the staple article of commerce. The population of the place is between 15,000 and 18,000 Mohammedans, and about thirty families of Sabæans, but there are no Christians.

Every Oriental traveller knows the ghost-like and unseemly costume of the Persian lady out of doors, muffled up in her blue or white wrapper, and peering through a perforated mask, which might have been borrowed from the helmet of a knight of the middle ages. At Dizfúl, however, many ladies adopt a local head-dress, by no means inelegant; it is a peculiar wide-meshed net of silk or cotton, which hangs over the head and shoulders, leaving only the face exposed; but as it would be indecorous on the part of a Mohammedan lady to allow

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a passer-by to see her features, the lady of Dizfúl holds a corner of the net in her hand, and endeavours—somewhat vainly, it must be admitted—to conceal them with it.

The dress of the men resembles that of Shúster, but the crowds of green and white turbans which meet him in the street cannot fail to strike a stranger. Every third man appears to be either a descendant of the prophet, or a priestly dignitary—than whom, more ungodly, depraved, and intriguing characters are not to be found in the realms of the Sháhinsháh. They are at the bottom of all mischief, and especially collect at Dizfúl—perhaps that they may hatch their plots, and carry on their rascalities, as far removed as possible from the seat of government. Aware of this fact, we thought it desirable not to state openly the object of our visit, but to give out that we proposed a pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet Daniel, and that we should stay there a few days;—the whole truth would doubtless soon make itself known. To Mírza Zekkí, the governor, however, we explained ourselves fully. He promised that a guide should be ready at sunrise, to conduct us to Shúsh, and strongly urged us not to delay our return longer than was absolutely necessary for our purpose, because the Bení Lám Arabs were plundering in the vicinity, and we should not be safe from their forays.

At daybreak, according to promise, our cicerone made his appearance, with letters to Sheikh Músá'd, a chief of the 'Alí Kethír Arabs, whose encampment was near the ruins. Our guide rode a well-bred gray mare, of which he appeared excessively proud. She was hung all round with red tassels, which dangled as low as her knees, materially impeding her progress; her bridle was likewise ornamented in the same manner. Upon a bright red saddle of felt sat the Arab, in his striped zibbún, confined to his waist by a wide belt, studded with silver, and

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containing a brace of old-fashioned silver-mounted pistols. Suspended from various parts of his person were numerous gourds and cases, belts and contrivances for carrying ammunition. A long spear, tufted with a large ostrich feather, and a shield, completed his picturesque attire. His manner was quite in keeping with his costume, for he was a most unsociable sort of being, uttering only monosyllables, and apparently half-witted.

The "púl," or bridge, which here crosses the "Diz" of course gives the name to the town of Dizfúl. It was once a fine structure, but, like its fellow at Shúster, is rapidly falling to decay. It, too, has experienced numerous repairs, which have not added to its beauty if they have to its usefulness. Of its twenty-one arches, one had lately disappeared into the torrent beneath, and its place was supplied by a roadway constructed of trees and earth—several feet, however, below the proper level, so that it required some little ingenuity and activity for the passenger to scramble down one extremity and up the other. The arches are all pointed, and built of brick of comparatively modern date. The piers are undoubtedly ancient, probably due, as tradition assigns them, to the age of Shápúr. Their construction is somewhat unusual; the interior portion is cut from the rock, but this being of a yielding nature, each is faced with large hewn blocks of stone, formerly held together by iron clamps: but the greater part of these have disappeared, and the masonry is fast following their example. To cross this bridge in its then condition was no easy matter. It is at all times crowded, but the couple of break-neck staircases, which it behoved every passenger to get over in the best way he could, caused a complete obstruction of the traffic. There was a continuous string of donkeys coming into the town laden with melons, cucumbers, grapes, and apricots, firewood and barley, every one struggling and

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jostling his neighbour for the precedency in crossing the abyss,—the ends of the firewood playing havoc among the easily damaged fruit,—the felt-coated owner of which was naturally wroth with "the father of the firewood." In the midst of the ensuing abuse, a stubborn donkey would delight in lying down and putting a stop to all further progress until his load were taken off and his back belaboured with a stout cudgel. At the same time, a long caravan, laden with no one knows what—dead bodies in wood coffins perchance, bound to Kerbella—would arrive to increase the confusion.

But, however, we got safely out of this *mêlé* with only a few scratches upon our loaded mules, and proceeded onward to our destination. The mounds of Shúsh are situated about fourteen miles south-south-west of Dizfúl, but it is necessary to make a considerable curve in order to avoid an angle of the river which at this point is rapidly wearing away high cliffs of alluvium. The rich land on the west bank of the Diz is well cultivated and watered by an infinite number of canals, derived from the river; lemon and orange trees diffuse the most delicious odours from several walled enclosures; rice, indigo, barley, vegetables, all arrive at perfection in this favoured soil. In the winter and spring, numbers of sturdy Lúrs descend from the mountains, and aid in the cultivation of the fields. Labour is cheap and food abundant, but a grinding taxation ruins everything, and there is no security for capital.

At twelve miles from Dizfúl are the lofty banks of an ancient canal far above the level of the Diz; from this I obtained my first view of the great mound at Shúsh—the flat platform at the top of which reared its head boldly above a series of intervening canal banks, and excited my utmost expectation. A farther ride of two miles brought us to its base. With much difficulty our mules clambered its almost inaccessible sides, and deposited

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their burdens on the ancient citadel. The tents were just pitched, and every person preparing to ensconce himself snugly from the rays of the sun, which began to make themselves exceedingly disagreeable, when we were all thrown into confusion by the cook, a poor, simple fellow, who managed to make a bonfire of the great mound of Shûsh—as probably Alexander the son of Philip had done before him! He had dug a hole, and arranged the wood preparatory to making ready our breakfast, when a spark from his flint and steel, igniting the dry grass, aroused us all to extinguish the flame, which, fanned by the wind, made rapidly towards the tents. For some time all our efforts were useless; there was no water at hand, and the few implements we possessed were not instantly attainable. There was no alternative but to knock down the tents, and get them away with all possible speed, but we did not succeed before several of the tent-ropes were consumed. At length a trench, dug round the devouring element, arrested its further progress, and we took stock of our property. Excepting the loss of a few ropes, and the gain of a few small holes, the tents escaped well; but our heavy luggage—such as boxes—had suffered severely on their exteriors. Into one the fire had actually penetrated, and was making a terrible onslaught upon a pair of boots, their next neighbour being a canister of English gunpowder, which was good enough not to explode while a dozen people were standing round, endeavouring to put out the fire! But the articles, dearly valued by my companion and myself—our umbrellas—which, beneath the sultry noon, had so often lent us their friendly shelter, lay grim skeletons at our feet! We often afterwards regretted those good friends! We had all previously complained of the sun's heat, but it was moonshine compared with that of the burning grass, which gave us some slight idea of the horrors attendant on an approaching

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fire on the American prairies, while it taught us a lesson—never to permit the cook to get to the windward of ourselves and the tents, nor to suffer his fire being lighted before the dry grass was cleared away from the immediate vicinity of the kitchen. Fortunately this happened as it did, otherwise we might have been burnt up during the night by the fall of a spark from our watchmen's pipes.

Before we had been twenty-four hours upon the mounds, it was evident that our proceedings were jealously watched, and that there was no prospect of making immediate excavations. Our attention was, therefore, directed towards completing a plan of the ruins; but soon after breakfast on the following morning the heat of the tents drove us to take shelter within the precincts of the Holy Shrine.

As it will be more in place to give a general description of Shúsh in connexion with the discoveries which were afterwards made in the ruins, I propose to defer that account for the present; but as the Tomb of Daniel is so intimately linked with all our difficulties, some slight notice of it will best occur here.

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CHAPTER XXV.

The Tomb of the Prophet Daniel—Arabic Traditions regarding him—Benjamin of Tudela's Account—Present State of the Sepulchre—Spies and Persian Fanaticism—Charge of Sacrilege—Ferment in Dizfúl and the Neighbourhood—The 'Alí Kethír Arabs—An accident befals the Author—Compelled to abandon the Mounds of Shúsh—Battle between the 'Alí Kethír and Bení Lám—Suleyman Khán the Christian Governor of a Mohammedan Province—Arrival of Colonel Williams.

By general consent of Jews, Sabæans, and Mohammedans, the burial-place of the Prophet Daniel is acknowledged to be at Shúsh, and a building at the west foot of the great mound is consecrated to him, and held in the utmost reverence by these different races. Pilgrims from all parts flock to "Danyel" to offer up prayers and bury their dead.

In the book which bears his name in our edition of the Scriptures, frequent allusion is made to Shushan the palace. As history, tradition, and, to some extent, the names, agree, we are justified in assuming that the ruins of Shúsh represent the Shushan of the Bible, and that Daniel was really buried on the spot. We have, however, the authority of an Arab historian for concluding that the present tomb of Daniel is but a comparatively modern edifice, and that the bones of the Prophet are not enshrined within its walls.

As the subject may be interesting to many of my readers, I extract the following from Sir William Ouseley's

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translation of a Persian version* of Ibn-Aasim-el-Kúfí's Tárikh, or "Book of Victories." After telling us that Abú Músa Alashá'ri invaded Persia under the Khálíf Omar in the eighteenth year of the hejira (A.D. 640), pillaged the territory of Ahwáz, and proceeded to Sús, where he slew the governor, a Persian prince, named Shápúr, the son of Azermáhán, the historian continues:—"Then he entered the castle and palace of that Prince, and seized all the treasures deposited there in different places, until he came to a certain chamber, of which the door was strongly fastened—a leaden seal being affixed to the lock. Abú Músa inquired from the people of Sús what precious article was guarded with such care in this chamber: they assured him that he would not regard it as a desirable object of plunder; but his curiosity was excited, and he caused the lock to be broken and the door opened. In the chamber he beheld a stone of considerable dimensions hollowed out into the form of a coffin; and in this the body of a dead man, wrapped in a shroud or winding-sheet of gold brocade. The head was uncovered. Abú Músa and his attendants were astonished; for, having measured the nose, they found that proportionably this dead personage must have far exceeded in stature the common race of men. The people now informed Abú Músa that this was the body of an eminent sage, who formerly resided in Irák (Chaldæa or Babylonia), and that whenever the want of rain occasioned a famine or scarcity, the inhabitants applied to this holy man, and through the efficacy of his prayers, obtained copious showers from heaven. It happened once that Sús likewise suffered from excessive drought; and the people in distress requested that their neighbours would allow this venerable personage to reside a few

* This Persian translation was made from the original Arabic, about A.D. 120.

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days among them, expecting to derive the blessing of rain from his intercession with the Almighty; but the Irákians would not grant this favour. Fifty men were then deputed by the people of Sús, who again petitioned the ruler of Irák, saying, 'Let the holy personage visit our country, and do thou detain the fifty men until his return!' These terms were accepted, and the holy personage came to Sús, where, through the influence of his prayers, rain fell abundantly, and saved the land from famine; but the inhabitants would not permit him to return, and the fifty men were detained as hostages in Irák: at length he died. Such, said those who accompanied Abú Músa, is the history of this dead man. The Arabian general then inquired by what name so extraordinary a person had been known amongst them? They replied—'The people of Irák called him Danyel Hakím, or Daniel the Sage.'

"After this, Abú Músa remained some time at Sús, and despatched to Omar, the Commander of the Faithful, an account of all his conquests in Khúzistán, and of the various treasures which had fallen into his possession; he related also the discovery of Daniel's body. When Omar received this account, he demanded from his chief officers some information respecting Daniel, but all were silent except 'Alí, on whom be the blessing of God! He declared that Daniel had been a prophet, though not of the highest order; that in ages long past he dwelt with Bakhtnasser (Nebuchadnezzar), and the kings who succeeded him; and 'Alí related the whole history of Daniel, from the beginning to the end, with all the circumstances of his death. Omar then, by the advice of 'Alí, caused a letter to be written, directing that Abú Músa should remove, with due respect and religious reverence, the body of Daniel to some place where the people of Sús could no longer enjoy the possession of it. Abú Músa,

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immediately on receipt of this order, obliged the people of Sús to turn the stream, which supplied their city with water, from its natural course; then he brought forth the body of Daniel, and having wrapped another shroud over the gold brocade above described, he commanded that a grave should be made in the dry channel of the river, and therein he deposited the prophet's venerable remains; the grave was then firmly secured, and covered with stones of considerable size; the river was restored to its former channel, and the waters of Sús now flow over the body of Daniel."*

The old Jewish writer, Benjamin of Tudela (A.D. 1160–1173), gives a similar account, but refers the burial of Daniel's body to Sanjar Sháh-ben-Sháh who conquered Samarkand in 1140, and died in 1157. He states that Shushan contained in his time "very large and handsome buildings of ancient date. It had seven thousand Jewish inhabitants, with fourteen synagogues; in front of one of which is the sepulchre of Daniel, who rests in peace. The river Ulai divides the city into two parts, which are connected by a bridge; that portion of it which is inhabited by the Jews contains markets, to which all trade is confined, and there all the rich dwell; on the other side of the river they are poor, because they are deprived of the above-mentioned advantages, and have even no gardens or orchards. These circumstances gave rise to jealousy, which was fostered by the belief that all honour and riches originated in the possession of the remains of the prophet Daniel, who rests in peace, and who was buried on the favoured side of the river. A request was made by the poor for permission to remove the sepulchre to the other side, but it was rejected; upon which a war arose, and was carried on between the two parties

* See Walpole's "Travels in Various Countries." At vol. ii. p. 428 is given the above translation of the history of Daniel's body by Sir William Ouseley.

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for a length of time. This strife lasted until 'their souls became loath,' and they came to a mutual agreement, by which it was arranged that the coffin which contained Daniel's bones should be deposited alternately every year on either side. Both parties faithfully adhered to this arrangement, until it was interrupted by the interference of Sanjar Shâh-ben-Shâh who governs Persia and holds supreme power over forty-five of its kings." . . . .

"When this great emperor Sanjar, king of Persia, came to Shûshan and saw that the coffin of Daniel was removed from one side to the other, he crossed the bridge with a very numerous retinue, accompanied by Jews and Mahommedans, and inquired into the reason of these proceedings. Upon being told what we have now related, he declared it to be derogatory to the honour of Daniel, and commanded that the distance between the two banks should be exactly measured, that Daniel's coffin should be deposited in another coffin made of glass, and that it should be suspended from the centre of the bridge by chains of iron. A place of worship was erected on the spot, open to every one who desired to say his prayers, whether he be Jew or Gentile: and the coffin of Daniel is suspended from the bridge unto this very day. The king commanded that, in honour of Daniel, nobody should be allowed to fish in the river one mile on each side of the coffin." *

The modern building has been frequently described by travellers, but as their accounts may not have fallen under the notice of many of my readers, I venture on giving the following sketch.

The reputed tomb of the prophet Daniel† is an oblong edifice, forming one side of a large walled court, through which the pilgrim enters to reach the sacred threshold.

* See the article "Benjamin of Tudela," p. 105 of Early Travels in Palestine, published in Bohn's Antiquarian Library.

† A ground plan of the tomb is shown on the plan of the Mounds.

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Seen from across the little river Shâour, which flows at its foot, enshrouded in a dense mass of date-trees, konars, and jungle, its conical white spire rising above all, is a picturesque object, and is the more interesting from the associations so intimately connected with its origin. Entering beneath a low doorway, the visitor is ushered into the great court, the opposite side of which is supplied with mangers and rings for the reception of horses and beasts of burden, for it is unsafe to leave them outside, on account of lions and other wild animals, which abound in the neighbourhood. On this account, too, the tomb is the frequent resort, for the night, of Arab parties on a journey from the deserts to the seat of government, and of plundering parties preparatory to their morning forays. Two other sides of the court are occupied by a low arched portico which conducts to the door of the sanctuary. This consists of two chambers, and a passage between them leading to a third apartment, in which the paraphernalia of the tomb are stored. The inner room is extremely dark and dismal, in accordance with the universal feeling that darkness is inseparably connected with the presence-chamber of death; here stands the supposed shrine, which, in the dim light of the place, appears to be a slab of white marble, but which is in reality only polished cement. It is enclosed within an open framework of wood, erected at a sufficient distance, however, to admit of passage round the sepulchre, the floor being covered with extremely dirty prayer-mats, swarming with fleas. These, and a few old lamps of rude forms, black from smoke and grease, constitute the whole of the ordinary furniture. Religion in the East, at the present day, certainly does not boast of much outward display in this respect, nor is cleanliness in the temple esteemed essential to purity of worship. The externally "whited sepulchre" is no criterion by which to judge of its internal condition;

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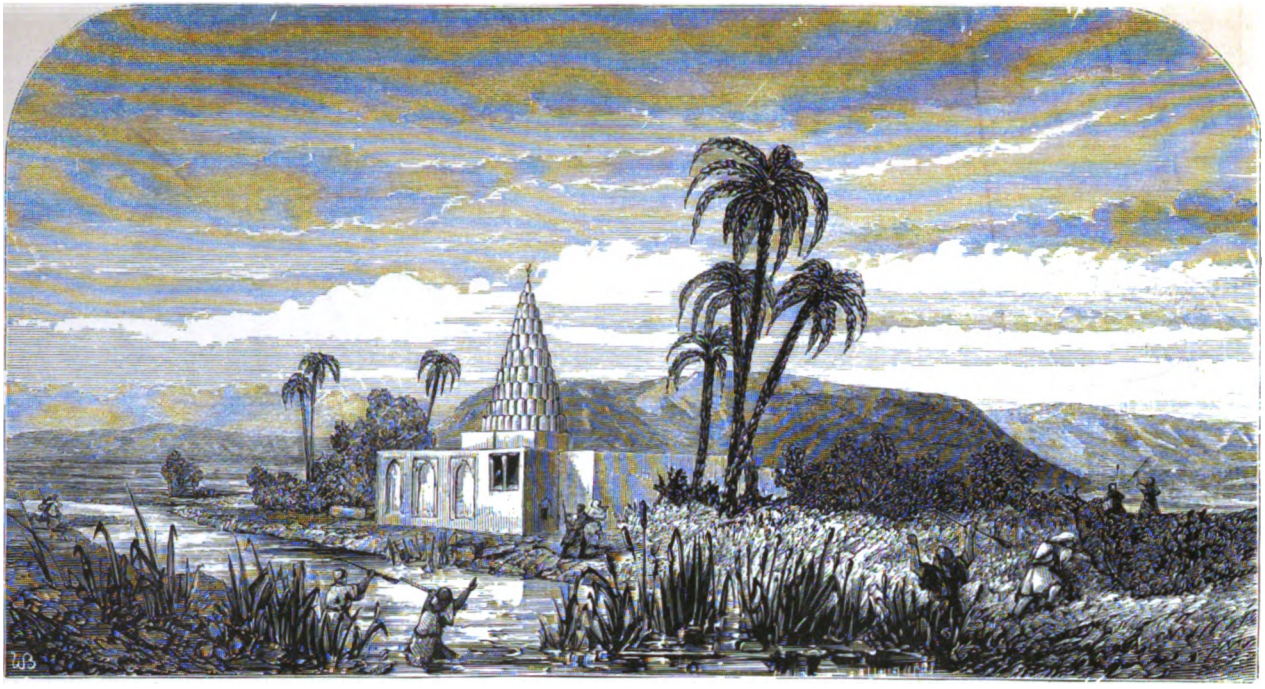

Tomb of the Prophet Daniel, and the Ruins of Susa. From a Sketch by H. A. CHURCHILL, Esq., C.B.

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neither is the repeated washing of the sanctified seyid any proof of his religious sincerity. A small veranda runs outside the wall of the sanctuary, overlooking the deep sluggish stream of the Sháour, and its green waters meandering through the dense mass of vegetation on its banks.

The terrace upon the roof of the building is used as a sleeping apartment by the pilgrims during the hot weather, and it is not unusual to see it completely covered with prostrate sleeping forms. From its centre rises the tall white spire which denotes the character of the edifice, and partakes of the usual ornamental features, in resemblance to the fir-cone, before alluded to in this volume as peculiar to most other Oriental tombs.* Beneath the sacred chamber, but without communication with it, is a vaulted room, entered from a doorway on the side of the Sháour, having apertures at the opposite extremity, through which flows a cool current of air. This was cleared of the filth which encumbered its floor, and here we took up our quarters during the heat of the day.

We had, however, scarcely established ourselves in our agreeable retreat, on the morning after our arrival, than we were disturbed by the arrival of a party of Lútís,† or strolling players, and a huge ugly baboon, which was incited to play its antics in all parts of the building without any respect for its extreme sanctity. Seeing the little deference observed, my companion imagined that he could not be doing harm or offending the prejudices of the few natives around us by skinning and preserving, at the door of our cell, a porcupine he had just shot. While engaged in this occupation, we were surprised by three strangers, whose green turbans indicated their descent, and whose countenances exhibited intensity of bigotry and its attendant qualities of

* See page 35.

† Lútí literally means "a thief," and is applied to any low character.

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hatred and persecution. They walked in without ceremony, and as unceremoniously requested us to walk out, which we quietly and politely, but positively declined to do. The chief and most ill-favoured of the three thereupon broke forth into a torrent of ejaculations and exclamations at the audacity of the Franks who dared to enter and defile the sanctuary of the holy Imám. This, however, had no effect upon us; we retained our seats unmoved, telling them that, since Daniel was esteemed a prophet by Christians as well as by Mussulmans, we had the same right to occupy the precincts of the tomb as themselves, or the baboon which sat upon the terrace above,—and that, moreover, we did not intend to budge one inch to please their bigotry! This unexpected answer had the proper effect,—it considerably cooled their tone, which now sobered down to the wish that, if we would not go out ourselves, my companion's unclean beast might be removed. To this, of course, we willingly complied, when it was explained that the porcupine is considered "nedjis."

They then seated themselves, and intimated that they were sent by the governor of Dizfúl to look after our safety and oblige the Arabs to supply our wants. They, however, brought no letters from Mírza Zekkí, nor did their manner afford any guarantee that their words were to be believed. It subsequently proved that they uttered a tissue of falsehoods, and that they were spies of the priesthood (who had got wind of our movements), sent to keep watch over our proceedings and conduct. Their mission we speedily divined by their contradictory replies to our questions, and the cunning attempts to extract information from us: a Persian usually overacts the part he desires to perform. The bigotry of our visitors may be judged from the fact, that they would neither smoke, drink tea, nor eat in our presence,—and their manner

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soon instilled into ourselves the most thorough contempt for them. While we sat they sat; when we proposed at sunset to take a ride they must needs accompany us; if we visited sheikh Músá'd, they likewise volunteered their unwelcome presence; if we engaged in our survey, they purposely got in the way of our work. Finding, however, that they could not by fair means convict us of any heinous crime, whereby the indignation of the priesthood could be poured forth upon us, they tried another plan to effect their purpose.

On the following day, while sitting in our tents, we were surprised to see a dense smoke arise from the thicket adjoining the tomb. Our enemies had suddenly disappeared, but, before departing, had fired the brushwood in order to give some shadow of truth to the report which they took every pains to spread on their return to Dizfúl, —representing that we had taken pigs into the sepulchre and defiled it in sundry and various ways,—that we had knocked down the tomb,—placed gunpowder in the walls, —and fired the grass that the revered and sacred edifice might no longer exist! All Dizfúl, as may well be imagined, was in a furious state of ferment, and vengeance was declared against the sacrilegious infidels who had dared to perpetrate such crimes! A full conclave of priests was held, and a long debate ensued as to the best method of ridding the world of the audacious strangers who, taking advantage of their friendly introductions, had violated every feeling of friendship. Many applicants presented themselves before the holy council, stating their readiness, their anxiety to be our executioners! But a difficulty presented itself which induced the sacred assembly to hesitate before leaping the barrier. We were in the service of the Súltán Englízí, the friend of the Sháh, and if any ill happened to us, it would be doubtless called to account for its

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share in the transaction. The fear of the Sháh, or rather of the troops of Hissám-ed-dowlet,* was beginning to gain ground, when, as good luck would have it, one of our servants was caught making purchases in the bazaars, and hurried off, *nolens volens*, to the court. He boldly stated what he knew to be true, namely: that some persons had set fire to the jungle round the tomb, but that our people, himself among the number, had been instrumental in quenching it, and that the tomb stood as unscathed as before our arrival,—that we had no pigs, neither had we defiled nor attempted to burn or blow it up. The mújtehid, or chief priest, on whom the responsibility would have fallen, thinking it best to be wise, dismissed the council with the remark that he believed us "not guilty."

The feeling of violent animosity excited against the Firenghí, however, did not readily subside: a report now spread that we had come to dig up and carry off the bones of the prophet, and the ignorance of the people fully believed it. On the third day several Arab sheikhs paid us visits to satisfy their curiosity, and also to intimate to our people that, if it were not for Suleyman Khán, our throats should feel the sharpness of their swords. In order to do away with the suspicion with which we were regarded, we decided on stating openly the true object of our visit and on asking the sheikhs for workmen. This frankness produced a good impression, and several promises were given to aid us, never however, to be fulfilled, because they were jealous of our having other plans, and afraid of our searching for the relics of the prophet, which, it is well known, are not deposited in the tomb.

A few words concerning the Arabs of this region may

* The honorary title applied to Suleyman Khán, meaning, "the sword of the government."

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not be unacceptable. During the greater part of the year, the plains around Shúsh áre perfectly desolate, and not a human being is to be seen, except now and then solitary parties wending their way to and from the shrine. In early spring, however, the Arabs flock to the banks between the Kerkhah and the Diz for the rich pasturage which everywhere prevails around the ancient ruins. From the top of the great mound, the black tents and flocks of the 'Alí Kethír Arabs may then be seen studding the landscape, at times half-buried in the luxuriant abundance of the grass. According to their own account, the tribes of the 'Alí Kethír originally came from Nedjid, in the centre of Arabia, about two hundred and fifty years ago. At first they were encouraged by the Persian government, which, up to the time of Feth 'Alí Sháh, gave them presents, as an inducement to their settling and cultivating the land. Gradually this gratuity became smaller and smaller, until it was wholly cancelled, and the scale turned on the opposite side by Mohammed Sháh, under whom tribute was exacted. This was gradually increased in amount, and 2500 tománs (about £1250) were being then paid. The number of families, in 1850, probably amounted to about 15,000, and were placed under a sheikh of their own tribe, who was taxed according to the amount of tribute he could command. It is to be doubted, however, whether, instead of two hundred and fifty years, this tribe has not been settled in these regions ever since the Arab conquest of Persia. Being of the Sheah sect, their intermarriage with the inhabitants of Dizfúl has materially altered their caste of countenance, which now partakes more of the Persian than the Arab character. This change could scarcely, I imagine, have taken place within so short a period. Not only, too, have they lost their national features, but, through continual intercourse with the bigotted Persians, they have imbibed the worse passions and qualities of that

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race in addition to their own. I have invariably found, that the Arab tribes, under Persian domination, have lost the noble virtues of their Bedouin ancestors, and that they are cunning, and deceitful, without truth or shame ;—but, of all others, the 'Alí Kethír boast of the most detestable character, and are least to be trusted by strangers.

Notwithstanding their promises, workmen were not forthcoming for the excavations. Whether this system of hanging out false colours originated with themselves, or whether they were bribed by the priests, I could never ascertain; but one thing is certain—we left Shúsh without opening a trench.

Our time was spent in much the same manner every day while we remained upon the ruins. In the cool of the morning we were occupied in laying down our plan; the mid-day sun drove us into the chamber under the tomb, where we passed the hours as best we could; and, when the heat had abated, we emerged from our den like jackals and wild beasts, and exercised ourselves by riding about the neighbourhood. In one of our rides we accidentally encountered a herd of about forty wild pigs, varying from the size of a monster boar, as big as a full-grown donkey, to that of a sucking pig a few weeks old. It was becoming dusk, but ardour for sport induced us to pursue them, in doing which my clumsy horse tripping over a ridge of earth, turned a complete somersault, and fell heavily on my ribs, giving me a serious hurt.

On being assisted into camp, a message was delivered from sheikh Músá'd to say that several parties of Bení Lám Arabs had been seen prowling about; that he would not be answerable for the consequences if we persisted in remaining upon the mounds; and that after that night he could not undertake to send watchmen to guard our little camp, seeing that they might be required to defend his own. We at first thought this a *ruse* to get rid of

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us, but, on the following day, his son Ha'waychum came with a more urgent message, to which we deemed it advisable to attend. I gave the order for our tents to be struck and removed to the sheikh's camp, situated about two miles distant.

When we were riding along together, Ha'waychum informed us that, as the harvest was now concluded, the stream of water, conveyed by a canal from the river Kerkhah to the vicinity of the ruins (which is sweet and pure, while that of the Sháour is so notorious for its unwholesome qualities that the Arabs never drink of it when other water is procurable) would be cut off in a few days, and that afterwards we might obtain it from whence we pleased. He had been tolerably civil on our first arrival, but now, either incited by the priesthood, or believing the current reports concerning our stay upon the ruins, he became extremely saucy, telling me, in a loud tone, that "Sheikh Músá'd had no instructions concerning us—he was not answerable for our safety—the land was theirs and not Hissám-ed-dowet's;—who was he, and who was the Sháh? Were the 'Alí Kethír to be accounted slaves or Arabs?" It is well known among travellers that firmness and a show of superiority are a sure method of gaining the respect of an Oriental, and that an appeal to his hospitality is seldom lost upon the sensitive feelings of an Arab. Although suffering great pain, I could not refrain from giving utterance to a somewhat severe rebuke, and therefore demanded "if this were a specimen of the far-famed Arab hospitality? We had travelled among the great Shammar, the Muntefik, aye, and among even the wild Mádán, and everywhere been received with unbounded cordiality. Were strangers esteemed beasts or dogs among the small tribe of the 'Alí Kethír, that we should be treated in such an illiberal manner? As guests of the Sháh we should lay

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our complaint of the treatment received before Hissám-ed-dowlat, and leave him to deal with Arabs who were become worse than either Turks or Persians!" Saying which, I directed my horse's head towards Dizfúl, adding that, "on our next return, we should come to excavate in the mounds in spite of either 'Alí Kethír or Seyid, armed with a firmán from the Sháh and an order from the governor, if the latter were supposed to have more effect upon them!" This high tone produced a sensible change in the manner of our host, who now entreated forgiveness, and prayed me to accompany him to his father's camp "where we should find that the 'Alí Kethír were still Arabs, and glad to offer the shelter of their tents to a stranger." At length I consented, and gave him my hand in token of reconciliation.

The change of quarters from the summit of the mound to the level of the plain was naturally accompanied by an augmentation of heat. Finding the temperature and closeness of my little tent on the following day unendurable, I determined on setting out for Dizfúl as soon as the moon rose early the next morning. Our plan, moreover, being completed, there was no further object to be attained by a longer exposure. About midnight we were aroused by a tremendous commotion in the Arab camp. The report that the Benî Lám were in the neighbourhood proved true, for they came quietly and stole all the corn our hosts had buried on the side of the encampment opposite to that at which our tents were pitched, making off with their booty before they were detected. Superstitious as our hosts were, they, no doubt, attributed their ill luck to our presence, and were extremely gratified at seeing our departure.

After some difficulty the governor of Dizfúl succeeded in hiring for me a small house near the tomb of Imám Sháh Rúbend, a short distance above the town, over-

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looking a bend of the river. A cool serdáb was excavated in the gravel cliff, and the terrace on the house-top enjoyed every welcome breath of air which blew down the stream at night. Here, under ground during the entire day, and upon the terrace from sunset to sunrise, I spent a miserable month;—the injury sustained by the fall of my horse was so painful that I was obliged to lie quiet and abstain from excitement of any kind. Dizfúl did not furnish either a doctor, a leech, or a blister; but, thanks to a good constitution, a small medicine chest, and careful diet, I succeeded in keeping down fever and in gradually overcoming the effects of the accident.

The influence exerted by the governor and the mújtehid over the people and priesthood served to allay the popular irritation, while our return from Shúsh was esteemed a great triumph and a proof of the power exercised by the Prophet. The seven lions, supposed to guard his tomb, had, it was reported, threatened to devour the infidels unless they made off with all speed.

A few days after our return to Dizfúl, news arrived from Shúsh that a skirmish had taken place between the Bení Lám and 'Alí Kethír. A party of the former were seen on the western bank of the Kerkhah by our late hosts, one hundred of whom crossed the river and were defeated, one man being killed, several wounded, and a dozen prisoners, with the loss of all their highly-valued mares. Ha'waychum left a beautiful white mare in the hands of the conquerors, and only saved his life by swimming the Kerkhah.

At length Colonel Williams and the rest of his party, after an extended delay at Mohammerah in an atmosphere impregnated with malaria and sickness, joined us at Dizfúl, and in a few days we were luxuriating in a comparatively cool climate, amid the oak groves of Mun-

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gerrah,* in the Lúristán mountains, at an elevation of five thousand feet above the sea. But even at that altitude the thermometer frequently rose to 107° Fahr. in the shade.

It would far exceed the limits of this work were I to enter into an account of the highly interesting journey performed by the Commission to Kermánsháh, the rock-sculptures of Bisútún and Hamadán, Isfahán, the ruins of Pasargadæ and Persepolis, Shíráz, and the Mammasení Lúrs. Let it suffice that, at the end of the year, we once more descended to the plains of Dizfúl, where the Hissám-ed-dowlet, Suleyman Khán, was encamped with a strong Persian force—a necessary instrument for maintaining the Sháh's influence among the turbulent gentry of Khúzistán. This Christian governor of a Mohammedan province was an extraordinary man, and it is, as I have said, difficult to understand how he sustained his position among the bigotted community. He was a jolly, stout old gentleman, and, perhaps, if his red nose did not belie him, addicted to veritable shíráz, or something stronger. He was full of fun and courage; but the sun of his greatness had well nigh set; the days of his dignity were numbered. In an evil hour he was ordered to quell an insurrection at Behbehán, in the adjoining district of Fírúz Mírza, the Sháh's uncle, which the prince had failed to do. Suleyman Khán was successful, and the prince, indignant that a ghyáwr had outdone himself,

* At this place we had the misfortune to lose one of our little party—Mr Algernon Wood, first attaché to the British Embassy at Constantinople, and Secretary of the Commission. An imprudent bath in a cold mountain stream, when heated, brought on a violent attack of bronchitis, which, together with extreme lassitude from previous illness at Mohammerah, resulted in the untoward event. I cannot here omit a tribute to the memory of one whose affectionate and honourable qualities were so deservedly esteemed by all his acquaintance. His abilities as a linguist, and knowledge of Oriental character, rendered his death a great loss to the Commission.

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intrigued to effect the discharge of his successful competitor from the office he filled with such ability. The old gentleman complained severely, and with justice, of this conduct, and was soon about to deliver up the reins of government.

At the time of our visit, he was just recovering from a severe accident which had occurred to him in returning from his late conquest; being exceedingly stout, he travelled in a European carriage, but, being upset during a dark night, the wheels passed over his hips, and, in the confusion, his own guard managed to gallop over and otherwise seriously injure him.

Aware of the difficulty attending the commencement of excavations at Shúsh, and desirous, for the sake of science, that the opportunity of the stay made by the Commission in those regions should not be lost, Colonel Williams wrote to Colonel Sheil, H.B.M.'s ambassador at Teherán, requesting his influence in obtaining a firmán from the Sháh. The application was successful, and the document, giving the requisite permission, was duly received. Lieutenant Glascott and myself formed the vanguard of the party in taking possession of our old ground on the summit of the great mound, accompanied by two of Suleyman Khán's officers, with an order for Sheikh Músá'd to attend our orders. His tents were pitched upon the eastern portion of the ruins, and he soon obeyed the summons, with four watchmen, and a lamb as a present, besides a host of apologies for the smallness of his gift! It occurred to me that this was a different reception to that which Churchill and myself experienced only eight months previously, when this same sheikh threatened us with all kinds of torments and deaths. I reminded him of my promise to revisit Shúsh with a firmán from the Sháh; strangely enough, the words, then spoken at random, now proved true. Músá'd replied

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that, in one respect, a Firenghí is unlike a Persian—he invariably keeps his word! This was a decided improvement in feeling. He was anxious to know what he should bring as a present to the elchi, and whether he would be contented with a mare? I told him that "the elchi would accept of no presents—all he required was good conduct from the 'Alí Kethír, and he might rest assured that, if such were shewn, the elchi would not fail to represent it to the proper quarters."

A few days later, Colonel Williams and the whole English party were encamped upon the ruins. The great mound was, I thought, more imposing than on my previous visit, but the old tomb looked the picture of desolation and misery, the trees around had lost their green leaves, and the white spire stood out prominent and cold against the dark rain-bearing clouds. Elsewhere, however, there was an air of freshness, a tint of green spread over the surface of the surrounding plain indicative of the near approach of spring; altogether it was a different scene to that universal and glaring sheet of yellow which greeted our former arrival.

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CHAPTER XXVI.

Early History of Susa—From the days of Cyrus, Susa the Winter-residence of the Persian Kings—Ahasuerus identical with Xerxes—Immense wealth found by Alexander—Power of Susa declines—Its Ruins at the present day—Abundance of Wild Beasts—Imposing aspect of Susa in early times.

WHETHER we regard it in a geographical, historical, or scriptural point of view, there are few places throughout the East more replete with interest than that which is known to us by the various denominations of Shushan, Susa, Sús, or Shúsh. Of its primitive history we, of course, know little; but the records of antiquity point to its origin amid the dim obscurity of oral tradition.

It would appear that Elam, the son of Shem, like the rest of the early descendants of Noah, founded a kingdom in the region we are accustomed to regard as the cradle of mankind,—this, at least, is the inference from the mention made, in Genesis xiv., of Chedorlaomer, King of Elam, who, in alliance with four neighbouring monarchs, extended his conquests to the west of the Euphrates during the time of the patriarch Abraham. We read, moreover, in Ezra iv. 9, that the Elamites were included among the dependencies of the Persian Empire; and, in Daniel viii. 2, that Shushan, the palace, was situated in the province of Elam, which name is undoubtedly likewise preserved in "Elymais," the title by which the Greek and Roman authors designated a portion of ancient Susiana. We are,

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therefore, fairly justified in regarding the site of Susa as the original capital of the Elamites. At one time, it is suggested that the seat of Chedorlaomer was the great city of Kar Duniyas, mentioned in the Assyrian inscriptions as the metropolis of the lower country, and that it occupied the after-position of Susa;* at another time, philologists considered the name of Susa as a slight modification of Cush, and referred the early colonization of the surrounding region at the head of the Persian Gulf to the Hamite descendants of Noah, in accordance with the theory already mentioned in this work.† Then again, Herodotus‡ assigns the foundation of Susa to the Ethiopian Memnon, who went to the assistance of Priam, at the siege of Troy; and the same authority states that after him, the city was called Memnonia. Lastly, the Persian annals give the honour of its foundation to Houshenk, the grandson of Keyumerss, the second king of the early Pishdadian dynasty. All these discrepances, however, serve to prove the early antiquity and greatness of the ancient Susa.§

It is not until the time of Ashur-bani-pal, who reigned in Assyria about 650 B.C., that we find any positive historical mention of the place under its subsequent name of Shushan. Upon the bas-reliefs of that monarch, at Nineveh, are detailed the conquest of Susiana under the name of "Madaktu," and the taking of the city

* "Outlines of Assyrian History," by Sir H. Rawlinson. See Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Royal Asiatic Society. 1852.

† Page 96. One of the royal names occurring at Susa, and on monuments along the eastern shores of the Persian Gulf, is Tirhak—the same title as that of the Ethiopian prince Tirhakah, who warred with Sennacherib (2 Kings xix. 9; Isa. xxxvii. 9). Susa appears to have been the head-quarters of the true Cushites.

‡ v. 53, 54; viii. 151.

§ The magnificence and importance of ancient Susa are to be likewise inferred from its representation upon the embroidered pallium, or shawl, of Alcisthenes of Sybaris, described in Aristotle's Memorabilia.

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"Shushan," a ground plan of which appears upon the sculptures.*

The prominence given to this subject shews that a formidable rival of "Nineveh, that great city," existed in the south-east, when, at the summit of her greatness and renown, she held Babylon under her sway. Great confusion exists in our histories of events subsequently to this period, but it seems probable that, when Nabopolasser, in 625 B.C., revolted against Assyrian dominion, and made himself master of Babylon, he likewise seized Susiana as a tributary province. It was apparently in this condition when, after the defeat and death of Neriglissor, king of Babylon, 554 B.C., Abradates, king of Susa, overcome by gratitude to Cyrus for the protection offered to his wife, passed over with his forces to the Persians, and became the firm ally of the conqueror. Cyrus, on the death of Abradates, at the battle of Thymbra, a few years later, according to Xenophon,† succeeded to the government of the province of Susiana, and from that time Susa is repeatedly mentioned in history. But here a difficulty occurs in reconciling the Scriptural and profane accounts of the period. From the book of Daniel‡ we are led to conclude that Susa was once more restored to the King of Babylon, which might have taken place by truce about the time of the marriage of Cyrus, and of the accession of Belshazzar to the throne of Babylon. How-

* See page 366. Mr Layard, at p. 445 *et seq.* of Nineveh and Babylon, gives an interesting description of this monarch's bas-reliefs (upon which the above names occur), discovered in the palace of his grandfather Sennacherib. A palace, wholly erected by Ashur-bani-pal, was afterwards discovered and partially explored by Mr Hormuzd Rassam, in one chamber of which was a series of sculptures, in excellent preservation, recording the conquest of Susiana. The most artistic productions of this king—the *chef-d'œuvres* of Assyrian sculpture—were obtained by myself from the lower story of the same palace, and are now in the British Museum.

† Cyrop., v. 4, &c.

‡ Daniel viii. 1, 2.

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ever this might be, we learn that a royal palace existed there "in the third year of the reign of King Belshazzar," for Daniel saw in a vision that he "was *at Shushan in the palace*, which is in the province of Elam."* It has been attempted to prove that there were two cities of this name in the province of Susiana:—one, the Shushan of Scripture in the Bakhtiyárí mountains; the other, the Susa of the Greeks. It was supposed that the Scriptural expression, "Shushan the palace," was indicative of a distinction from some other city of the same name,† but the reasoning was based on fallacious grounds, which it is not here necessary to dilate upon. That Shushan and Susa are one and the same, we learn from the agreement of Josephus with Scripture. He mentions a famous edifice built by Daniel at Susa in the manner of a castle, which, the Jewish historian adds, was remaining in his time, and had been finished with such wonderful art that even then it seemed as fresh and beautiful as if only newly built. "Within the edifice," he continues, "was the place where the Persian and Parthian kings used to be buried; and, for the sake of the founder, the keeping of it was committed to one of the Jewish nation even to that day." It is true that the copies of Josephus, now extant, place this building at Ecbatana in Media; but St Jerome, who also gives an account of it, and professes to do so, word for word, out of Josephus, places it in Susa in Persia. Josephus calls this building *Baris*—the same name by which Daniel himself distinguishes the castle or palace of Shushan: for what we translate, *at Shushan in the palace*, is in the original, *Besh Shushan ha Birah*.‡ There is reason to believe that Daniel might have erected an edifice at Susa, because, in the reign of Belshazzar, he was evidently

* Daniel viii. 1, 2.

† Journal of the Geogr. Society, vol. ix. p. 85.

‡ Ker Porter's Travels, ii. 411–414. Josephus Antiq. x. 12, which author (xv. 114) also calls the fortress at Jerusalem "The Castle of Baris."

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in office,—probably governor of the city,—since he tells us that he "did the king's business."*

From the time of Cyrus, Susa became the chosen winter-seat of the Persian kings, and was richly embellished by succeeding monarchs. Under the sway of the Achæmenian dynasty, it usurped the greatness of its former rivals, Nineveh and Babylon. Strabo† informs us that "the building of Susa, its palaces, walls, and temples, was similar to that of Babylon, of bricks and cement," referring doubtless to the period before the reign of Darius, the son of Hystaspes, because we have, as will be presently shewn, positive proof that marble structures were erected by that king. It is certainly to these edifices that Pliny alludes,‡ when he attributes the foundation of Susa to Darius. The estimation in which it was held by neighbouring states may be gathered from the remarkable speech of Aristagoras to Cleomenes King of Sparta, when the former wished to engage him as an ally of the Ionians against Darius:—"Susa, where the Persian monarch occasionally resides, and where his treasures are deposited,—make yourself master of this city, and you may vie in influence with Jupiter himself!"§

Shushan is repeatedly mentioned in the books of Scripture at this period, in connexion with the return of the Jews from captivity, and the rebuilding of the temple at Jerusalem. One of the most interesting episodes in the history of the great Persian capital is that recorded in the Book of Esther, where the Jewish maiden is elevated to the queenly dignity, and, by her influence over the mind of the king Ahasuerus,‖ enables her captive coun-

* Daniel viii. 27. † L. 15. ‡ Lib. vi., ch. 27.

§ Herodotus, Terps. 49.

‖ Almost every Medo-Persian king from Cyaxares I. down to Artaxerxes III. (Ochus) has in turn been advanced as the Ahasuerus of Esther. An article in "Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature" so admirably sums up the question in favour of the Xerxes of Greek authors, that I cannot re-

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trymen to defend themselves throughout the kingdom against the irrevocable decree of that cruel monarch. "Thus the Jews smote all their enemies with the stroke of the sword, and slaughter and destruction, and did what they would unto those that hated them. And in Shushan the palace the Jews slew and destroyed five hundred men;"* and in the king's provinces were no fewer than seventy-five thousand of their enemies slain.

It was from Shushan or Susa that the same monarch, under the Greek name of Xerxes, set out on his ill-fated

frain from quoting the following rather lengthy extract:—"On the ground of moral resemblance to that tyrant (Ahasuerus), every trait leads us to Xerxes. The king who scourged and fettered the sea; who beheaded his engineers because the elements destroyed their bridge over the Hellespont; who so ruthlessly slew the eldest son of Pythius because his father besought him to leave him one sole support of his declining years; who dishonoured the remains of the valiant Leonidas; and who beguiled the shame of his defeat by such a course of sensuality, that he publicly offered a reward to the inventor of a new pleasure—is just the despot to divorce his queen, because she would not expose herself to the gaze of drunken revellers; is just the despot to devote a whole people, his subjects, to an indiscriminate massacre; and, by way of preventing that evil, to restore them the right of self-defence, and thus to sanction their slaughtering thousands. . . . . There are also remarkable coincidences of date between the history of Xerxes and that of Ahasuerus. In the third year of his reign the latter gave a grand feast to his nobles, which lasted one hundred and eighty days (Esth. i. 3); the former, in *his* third year, also assembled his chief officers to deliberate on the invasion of Greece (Herod. vii. 8). Nor would we wonder to find no nearer agreement in the two accounts than is expressed in the mere fact of the nobles being assembled. The two relations are quite compatible; each writer only mentioning that aspect of the event which had interest for him. . . . . Again Ahasuerus married Esther, at Shushan, in the seventh year of his reign: in the same year of *his* reign Xerxes returned to Susa with the mortification of his defeat, and sought to forget himself in pleasure;—not an unlikely occasion for that quest for fair virgins for the hárem (Esth. ii. 2). Lastly, the tribute imposed on the land and isles of the sea also accords with the state of his revenue, exhausted by his insane attempt against Greece. In fine, these arguments, negative and affirmative, render it so highly probable that Xerxes is the Ahasuerus of the Book of Esther, that to demand more conclusive evidence would be to mistake the very nature of the question."—See Article on *Ahasuerus*.

* Esther ix. 5, 6, &c.

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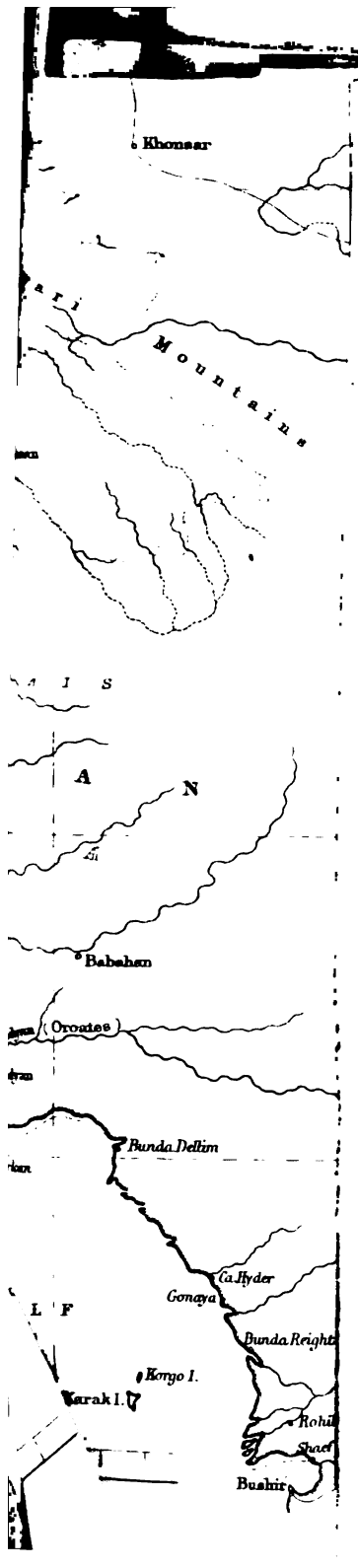

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expedition for the subjugation of Greece, and it was here that on his return he deposited the immense treasures obtained from the plunder of the temple at Delphi, and the city of Athens.

Still later, when Alexander broke the might of Persian power at the battle of Arbela, we have Susa represented as the depository of the wealth, produced by the exactions imposed for several centuries upon the impoverished districts of that great empire, which the "kings of kings" vainly imagined they had amassed for their posterity. We read that the governor of the province went out from the city to meet the conqueror with presents worthy of a king, and that on entering Susa, Alexander found in the treasury immense sums of money, with fifty thousand talents of silver* in ore and ingots, five thousand quintals of Hermione purple,† and among other articles a portion of the property which Xerxes had carried off from Greece. There was, therefore, some foundation for the importance attributed by Cleomenes to the possession of this treasure-city!

Susa is repeatedly alluded to by the historians of Alexander's campaigns, and during the wars of his successors, when it repeatedly changed hands. At length, in the year 250 B.C., the Parthian Arsaces, raising the standard of revolt against Antiochus Theos, made himself master of all the eastern provinces of the Macedonian empire beyond the Tigris, and founded the Parthian empire, which endured until 226 A.D. Little is known to us of this warlike people during the five centuries of their dominion, but Susa continued one of the chief cities of that race, and of the early Sassanian kings who succeeded them. In the second or third century of our era,

* About £7,500,000 sterling.

† A quintal is about a hundredweight; the immense value of this celebrated purple is to be calculated at the rate of £25 per lb.

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a Christian see was established there; but Susa gradually declined before Ctesiphon, Jundí Shápúr, and Shúster, and was at length taken by the Mohammedáns in the eighteenth year of the Kálíf Omar, A.D. 640. Coins were struck there in A.D. 709, soon after which date the place seems to have been deserted in favour of adjoining towns which were rising into importance; and the history of its former greatness alone remained in the recitations of Persian poets, the exaggerated traditions of the people, and the vastness of its mounds.

Such are the principal antecedents of Shúsh—as far at least as it is possible to give them in moderate compass. It is now proposed to describe the state of the place previous to the excavations undertaken there in 1851-2.

If reference be made to a map of this region, it will be seen that, soon after debouching into the plains from the adjacent mountains, the two great rivers, the Kerkhah and the river of Dizfúl, approach each other at right angles. When within two and a quarter miles of forming a junction, they again recede from each other, the former to pursue its course to the Shat-el-Aráb, near Korna, and the latter to join the Kárún at Bender-ghil. At the point where these rivers most nearly approximate, stand the mounds of Shúsh, distant about three quarters of a mile from the Kerkhah, and a mile and a half from the river of Dizfúl. When the atmosphere is favourable, they are clearly visible from Dizfúl city, and, with a telescope, I have discerned them from the summit of the Mungerrah mountains, thirty miles distant. At the eastern base of the ruins stands the tomb of Daniel, on the verge of the Sháour, a deep but narrow stream, rising from the plain a few miles on the north, and flowing, at a sluggish pace, towards its junction with the river of Dizfúl. The area occupied by the ruins covers an extent of ground three

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and a half miles in circumference, and, if the numerous small mounds around the great mass be included, spreads over the whole visible plain east of the Sháour. To the west of that stream are no ruins whatever.

The principal existing remains consist of four spacious artificial platforms, distinctly separated from each other. Of these the western mound is the smallest in superficial extent, but considerably the most lofty and important.* According to the trigonometrical measurement of my friend Lieutenant Glascott, R.N., † the northern and highest point is 119 feet above the level of the Sháour at the ford. In form it is an irregular, obtuse-angled, triangle, with its corners rounded off, and its base facing nearly due east. It is apparently constructed of earth, gravel, and sun-dried brick, sections being exposed in numerous ravines produced by the rains of winter. The sides are so perpendicular as to be inaccessible to a horseman except at three places.‡ The measurement round the summit is about 2850 feet. In the centre is a deep circular depression, probably a large court, surrounded by elevated piles of building, the fall of which has given the present configuration to the surface. Here and there are exposed, in the ravines, traces of brick walls, which shew that the present elevation of the mound has been attained by much subsequent superposition.

About half-way down the slope of the south-west side§ lies a large fragment of cherty-fracturing blue limestone,

* Numbered 1 on the Plan.

† From a series of observations of the same gentleman, the south point of the mound (B on the plan) is in latitude 32° 11′ 25″ N., and its longitude is roughly estimated at about 48° 27′ 0″ E. I may take this opportunity to remark that the plan is chiefly due to the survey made with a prismatic compass by Mr Churchill, the main points being afterwards correctly fixed with the theodolite by Lieutenant Glascott.

‡ Two of these are represented on the plan of the mounds, the other is at the south-west angle.

§ At the end of trench A on plan.

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which appears to have been part of an obelisk. The upper side bears thirty-three lines of complicated characters in a Scythic dialect of the cuneiform, not at present deciphered, although Sir Henry Rawlinson has succeeded in reading upon it the name of an early king called Susra.* Other blocks of similar stone, and another of sandstone, lie upon the plain below.

From the remarkably commanding position of the great mound, which is called by the people of the country, "the kál'a" or castle, I have no hesitation in recognising in it the citadel of Susa, to which Arrian† pointedly alludes in the following passage:—"When we had sacrificed according to national custom, and held torch races and athletic games, Alexander appointed Abulites, a Persian, satrap of Súsiana, gave the command of the garrison (1000 disabled Macedonian soldiers) in the citadel of Susa, to Mazarus one of his own staff, and made Archelaus, son of Theodorus, governor of the city (with 3000 men); after which he set out to go into Persia." The administration of civil affairs was entrusted to the Persian, but with his usual admirable policy, the military command of the place was submitted to the Greek generals. The importance of the citadel, commanding the rest of the city, may be gathered from the fact that he placed in it the well-tried soldiers who had followed him from his own native kingdom of Macedonia.

It was here, too, that the advancing Moslem host encountered the obstinate defence of Hormúzán, satrap of the Persian province, who, true to the cause of his fugitive sovereign Yezdijird, for six months held the place against all attacks. But courage and devotion were not proof against treachery. One of the garrison revealed to the besiegers a secret entrance through a conduit which

* Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xii., p. 482.

† "Arriani Expeditio Alexandri," iii. 16.

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supplied the castle with water; the Arabs, entering by night, threw open the outer gates, and let their army into the court yards. Hormúzán, from the battlements of a strong tower or keep, held a parley with the Arab leader, and, on promise of safe-conduct, finally yielded to the Khálíf, whose adviser he subsequently became in the prosecution of the war with Persia.

Separated from the citadel on the west by a channel or ravine, the bottom of which is on a level with the external desert, is the central great platform, covering upwards of sixty acres.* The highest point is on the south side, where it presents generally a perpendicular escarpment to the plain, and rises to an elevation of about seventy feet; on the east and north it does not exceed forty or fifty feet. The eastern face measures three thousand feet in length. Enormous ravines penetrate to the very heart of the mound.

The north mound,† a considerable square mass, seems to have been added at the north-west, and a smaller mass at the south-east corner of this mound. A slight hollow occurs between the north block and the main portion of this great platform, and was perhaps an ancient roadway.

The eastern platform, called upon the plan the ruins of the city,‡ is very extensive, but its limits are less easily defined, because its edges sink gradually into the plain.

There are no traces of walls for the protection of the city, and although Strabo alludes to them, it is probable that Susa depended much more upon its natural defences, the rivers of its province, than upon earthen ramparts.

Upon the extensive series of low mounds,§ extending to the Dizfúl river, are two tombs, Imáms 'Abbás and

* Numbered 3 on the Plan. † Numbered 2 on Plan.

‡ Numbered 4 on Plan.

§ Not shewn upon the Plan, from want of space.

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Ibráhím-el-Khálíl, which, like that of Daniel, are built of bricks and small capitals of white marble from the ruins.

A canal, derived from the Kerkhah, about two miles from the point where it enters the plain, passing round the head source of the Sháour, flows to the north and east of the great mass of mounds, and forms a small marsh at the south-west base of the central platform. The river Kerkhah has flowed considerably further east than at present, and its old bed may be traced within a third of a mile from the Sháour; in ancient times it probably defended the southern side of the city. The old bed to which I allude is now a thick forest of tamarisk, poplar, and acacia, and is said to be a celebrated cover for lions; in fact, I several times observed their traces here, and the people of the country shun the neighbourhood.

Susa abounds in wild beasts and game,—lions, wolves, lynxes, foxes, jackals, boars, porcupines, francolin, and a small species of red-legged partridge, find shelter in the density of the surrounding cover. During nine months in the year the whole country is burned up by the sun's heat, with an intensity which gives some credence to Strabo's report, that lizards and serpents could not crawl across the streets at mid-day without being burnt.* At the beginning of January, however, the young grass, brought into existence by the heavy rains, makes its appearance, and increases with a truly tropical rapidity and luxuriance; nowhere have I ever seen such rich vegetation as that which clothes the verdant plains of Shúsh, interspersed with numerous plants of a sweet-scented and delicate iris.†

Far in the south is seen the continuation of the Al[illegible]

* Strabo, xv. 3.

† *Moræa Sisyrynchium*, Ker. (*Iris Sisyrynchium*, L.) By some per[illegible] is supposed that the abundance of this beautiful flower gave the na[illegible] "Shúshan"—the lily—to this locality.

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low range, intervening between Susa and the plains of Háwíza, while, on the north and north-east, are the snow-topped chains of Lúristán and the Bakhtiyárí, skirted by external and gradually lowering ridges of sandstone and gravel conglomerate.

It is difficult to conceive a more imposing site than Susa, as it stood in the days of its Kayanian splendour,—its great citadel and columnar edifices raising their stately heads above groves of date, konar, and lemon trees,—surrounded by rich pastures and golden seas of corn,—and backed by the distant snow-clad mountains. Neither Babylon nor Persepolis could compare with Susa in position—watered by her noble rivers, producing crops without irrigation, clothed with grass in spring, and within a moderate journey of a delightful summer clime. Susa vied with Babylon in the riches which the Euphrates conveyed to her stores, while Persepolis must have been inferior, both in point of commercial position and picturesque appearance. Under the lee of a great mountain range, the columns of Persepolis rise like the masts of ships taking shelter from a storm, and their otherwise majestic appearance is lost in the magnitude of the huge, bare, rocky mass towering above them. Susa, on the contrary, stood on the open plain, with nothing in immediate proximity to detract from her imposing and attractive tableau. How are the mighty fallen! Where are now those great cities of ancient Persia, whence issued forth the formidable armaments destined to make even heroic Greece tremble in her greatest and most palmy days? How faithfully does their fate shadow forth that of Persia itself, and act as a warning to the proud and arrogant? The vast hosts of Darius and Xerxes served only to expose the riches and pride, as well as the weakness and cowardice of the Oriental character, and a few years brought with them the strong arm of Alexander,

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the chastener and avenger. The line of Persia's ancient monarchs was broken, and a son of insulted Greece snatched the sceptre from the fallen dynasty. From that time Persia sank lower and lower in the scale of nations; and, although the house of Sassan in some degree regained the power and splendour of the past, yet it was only temporary; each succeeding century has seen the vast empire of the king of kings getting deeper into the mire, until, at the present day, it has attained that pitch of decay and degradation from which it is difficult to foresee any speedy hope of regeneration or rescue.

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CHAPTER XXVII.

Excavations commenced by Colonel Williams—A Burglar—Conviction and Punishment—Gigantic Bell-shaped Bases of Columns discovered—A Year's Interruption—Proposed Resumption in 1852—Journey under the Protection of the Benî Lâm—The Segwend Lûrs—Hiring of Native "Navvies"—Opposition of the Priesthood—The Cholera ascribed to the late researches—The New Viceroy, Khânler Mîrza.

No time was lost, after Colonel Williams' arrival at the ruins, in commencing excavations. As there might be some difficulty in obtaining Arab workmen, notwithstanding the specious promises of Sheikh Mûsa'd, the under-servants of the Commission were at once employed in digging a trench from the prostrate and inscribed slab on the south side of the citadel, into the very heart of the mound.* By sunset they had opened a trench, forty feet long and nine feet deep, much to the astonishment of the few Arabs who watched the proceeding, and wondered at the audacity of the Firenghî elchi. The only discovery made this day was a cylindrical sepulchral vase, of baked clay, three feet long, and eleven inches in diameter at the mouth, rounded at the opposite extremity; the interior being lined with bitumen, and containing the bones of a child, and a few beads. It was one of those vases which I attribute to the Sassanians.

On the second day, an order arrived from Suleyman Khân with permission for the Arabs to aid Colonel Williams,—but only a small party could be induced to accept the kerân a day offered for their services, the

* At A on Plan.

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chiefs keeping out of the way. At length, on the third day, Sheikh Musá'd, and his son Ha'waychum, called to pay their dutiful respects to the elchi, but more particularly to ask the loan of ten tománs, which they promised to repay in as many days—a rather cool request on a first visit! Not succeeding in their wishes, they returned to their tents evidently dissatisfied with the result of their errand.

Sheikh Músá'd was required to provide a guard of his people to watch over the safety of our property, and nightly at sunset a dozen of his ill-looking rascals, with bristly beards and bitumen clubs, marched, or rather straggled into camp, to be stationed at various eligible points for the prevention of surprise. Five nights subsequent to the demand for tománs, an event occurred which speedily deprived us of the near neighbourhood of Sheikh Músá'd's camp. It was the duty of one of the bekjís to keep guard upon my tent and that of Lieutenant Glascott, situated on the south edge of the great mound. I was suddenly awakened in the dead of the night by a rustling noise against the canvass; but, as jackals and foxes had taken an especial liking to the camp, and prowled about, committing all sorts of strange antics and depredations, such as biting tent ropes and stealing corn bags from off the very noses of the horses, I supposed that some of these animals were taking their usual diversions, but became at last convinced that a human being was effecting an entrance into my tent. I imagined that, by getting quietly out of bed, the unwelcome intruder might be caught; but, unfortunately, the noise I made in rising betrayed my intentions,—a signal was given, and a desperate tug at the canvass announced that the intruder had fled. I quickly followed in the direction he took towards the adjoining tent, where the bekjí sat crouching in such an attitude as at once convicted him of being an accomplice. He was seized, and placed in custody until

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daybreak, notwithstanding his protestations of innocence. On examination it was discovered that two of my tent-pegs were drawn, and the outer curtain propped up by a short club, two pegs of the inner wall were likewise removed, several articles of apparel strewed about, and one or two actually gone. Next day, Colonel Williams sent for the sheikh, but the prisoner, of course, declared he had nothing to do with the matter, although the stick propping up the tent was proved to be his. Músá'd drew his sword and threatened to cut the fellow down unless he confessed, but he still persisted in his innocence. Músá'd then proposed to take and punish him at his own camp; but the elchi, not to be imposed upon by an Arab, insisted that the fellow should either be punished on the spot, or sent into Dizfúl. The latter arrangement did not exactly suit the sheikh's book, for, although the thief would have been punished by the amputation of a hand or arm, Músá'd himself would have lost that which he valued much more—namely, a good round sum of keráns by way of fine. Ha'waychum was therefore called upon by his worthy father to perform the part of Ferash bashí (executioner) with the thick stick he usually carried. The wretched culprit was tied hand and foot, crying for mercy—but that, alas! was in vain —down went the blows as fast as hail upon any part of his body which was uppermost—no matter whether, rolling over in agony, he presented his back, stomach, leg, foot, elbow, head, or nose,—Ha'waychum shewed no compassion till the stick was reduced to splinters, and himself exhausted! When the punishment was concluded, the released sufferer in an instant disappeared like a shot over the edge of the mound, as though the punishment had diffused extra life and activity into his bones and muscles!

It was to be naturally expected that this example

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would have deterred further theft; but no! on the following morning our best mule was missing, and two others were caught running loose with their ropes cut. The consequence of these *contretemps* was, that the Arabs were afraid to work lest any of them should be suspected and punished like the bekjí on the previous day. Two mornings later, smoke rising from the adjoining mound announced that Músá'd and his tribe had departed, and, as usual, fired the refuse of their camp.

Up to this time, three trenches, dug into the citadel mound to the depth of nineteen feet, failed to discover anything except portions of a brick pavement,—fragments of moulded composition-bricks stamped with cuneiform, and covered with green glaze,—and* a large piece of copper like the lining of a water-tank, which, being left upon the mound, was soon cut up and carried away piecemeal by the Arabs.

When reduced once more to our own resources, Colonel Williams directed his attention to the numerous blocks and pieces of limestone lying upon the surface of the mounds, especially upon the north and central platforms, in the hope that some discovery might be made, which would justify the opening of trenches at some particular spot. It was evident that some magnificent structures once existed at Susa, for the surface of the mounds was strewed with fragments of fluted columns, which had frequently attracted the notice of travellers.

Near E on the plan was a large block of blue limestone, about ten feet square and three feet thick, projecting through the soil, and resting on a gravel foundation. It was doubtless the basement stone of a broken fluted column lying near at hand. Further westward was a considerable growth of mimosa plant, whose prickles rendered a passage through them a matter of difficulty to

* At C, on General Plan of Mounds.

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ourselves and damage to our clothing. This underwood extended along the edges of a rectangular projection, near the middle of the north mound, which I conceive to have been added at a late period to the north-western extremity of the great central platform.

Near the north-west angle of this projection among the brushwood, Colonel Williams observed a small piece of limestone projecting through the soil, and on excavating around it, discovered the gigantic monolith base of a column *in situ*.* Further excavations revealed two similar bases † at equal distances apart, twenty-seven and a half feet from centre to centre, and four feet below the surface. They were buried below vegetable soil, a pavement of coarse bricks, a layer of lime cement, and gravel. They rested on rough limestone slabs, nine feet square by one foot ten inches thick, and were all unfortunately broken off at three feet four inches from the basement; but subsequently there was discovered near them a fragment of the upper part of the base with the torus attached, from which Mr Churchill was able to make a carefully-restored drawing of a perfect base. There could be no hesitation in concluding that Colonel Williams had discovered a palace of the ancient Persian monarchs at Susa, rivalling, if not surpassing, that at Persepolis in grandeur. The bases were bell-shaped, and richly carved, in representation of the inverted flower of a plant which we usually term the Egyptian lotus. The following are measurements carefully taken :—

Diameter at the swell of the bell,	8 ft. 4 in.
„ „ torus,	5 „ 4 „
Height of plinth, . .	2 in.
„ from plinth to torus,	4 ft. 1 in.
Total height of bases,	4 ft. 3 in.

The general form, the dimensions, and the peculiar style

* Number 7 of Plan, page 366. † Numbers 6 and 5.

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of ornamentation employed, cannot fail to remind the observer of the column bases in the Great Hall, attributed to Xerxes, at Persepolis, but those of Susa are infinitely more graceful in design and detail, exhibiting round the swell of the bell an elegant and elaborate wreath, formed by alternate buds and perfect flowers of the lotus.*

At the western foot of the mound were the breast of a fractured bull, enormous fragments of fluted columns, and portion of a fourth base similar to the other three, amidst a quarry of debris.

Trenches were then carried from two of the pedestals, fifty-five feet into the mound; and, from the centre of the third monolith, holes were dug twenty-seven feet apart, in the expectation of others being found. Excavations were likewise made at E (on the General Plan), but nothing further could then be discovered of the elegant building to which the fragments undoubtedly belonged.

During a month's residence at Shúsh, Colonel Williams' researches were much interrupted by the misconduct of the Arabs, as well as by the heavy spring rains, which at times threatened to wash our encampment bodily into the swollen Sháour below. Suleyman Khán was much annoyed at the behaviour of our neighbours, and there can be little doubt that, except for his presence at Dizfúl, the Arabs would have declined to lend the little aid they did. None of the great sheikhs

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* See woodcut, page 369. The beautiful design, which so frequently occurs upon the sculptures at Nineveh and on the column bases at Susa and Persepolis, is usually supposed to represent the flower of the Egyptian lotus (*Nymphæa Lotus*), but it may equally well be intended for the Egyptian bean (*Nelumbium speciosum*), the κναμος of Pythagoras, now no longer an inhabitant of the Nile, but indigenous to the East Indian rivers. In some cases, however, as in a slab recently exhumed from Nineveh, the flower is evidently that of the common white lily of our gardens (*Lilium candidum*).

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paid the respects which were customary towards a person in the official position of Colonel Williams. Their utter detestation of the Firenghí was evinced in every possible mode. They refused to sell corn or sheep to our party; they abused our servants whenever they met; and they kept themselves as far as possible from the contaminating and dreaded influence of the hateful strangers.

At length the season arrived for the Commissioners to resume their labours and conferences at the "debateable land" of Mohammerah; and once more the green plains and healthy mounds of Susa were deserted for the less agreeable deserts on the borders of the Hafár. We all regretted the sad alternative, but duty required our presence upon the frontier.

Before any attempt was made to resume excavations at Susa, another year elapsed, during which interval great changes had taken place in Khúzistán. The threatened discharge of Suleyman Khán from the administration of the province actually took place: bribery and court intrigue had done their work. The Christian had played the same game, and ventured a high stake; a purse of tománs to the Sháh, and 20,000 more to the Amír, were spent in vain,—Khánler Mírza, the favourite uncle of the Sháh, took possession of the province. He had previously governed the Gúlpaigán district, near Isfahán, where his stern and unflinching distribution of justice gained him the greatest respect. To this were now added Lúristán, Khúzistán, and the Bakhtiyárí mountains, so that Khánler Mírza ruled over the largest, richest, and most important region throughout Persia. As a natural consequence of the change of governors, the whole of the above districts were in an excited state, and with difficulty prevented from breaking out into open rebellion. A few judicious examples were made by the

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Prince, whose iron rule soon made itself felt, alike among Lúrs and Arabs. At the end of 1851, the only disaffection still existing throughout the Prince's dominion was at its north-western extremity, among a division of the Feylí Lúrs.

In the interim, the delimitation of the Turko-Persian frontier proceeded but slowly, and December 1851 saw the four Commissions assembled at Zoháb, in the Persian province of Kermánsháh, without any material results of their labours. Letters were there received from Colonel Rawlinson, at Bághdád, stating that, during the previous session, a sum of £500 had been voted by Parliament, and placed at his disposal, for the purpose of making further researches at Susa. Lord Palmerston's consent had likewise been obtained, authorising my being employed in excavations, when not otherwise more profitably engaged. As the movement of the Commissioners was directed from Zoháb towards the south, keeping along the plains, my services as geologist could, for the present, be dispensed with by Colonel Williams, who therefore directed me to proceed to Bághdád, and receive Colonel Rawlinson's instructions concerning the prosecution of excavations at Susa.

In the middle of January I once more rejoined the Commission at Mendelí, whence, provided with letters to the Prince, and armed with the Sháh's firmán, I prepared for an adventurous journey of two hundred miles across the desert to Dizfúl. I travelled under circumstances of more than ordinary difficulty, none of the authorities being willing to ensure my safety. The region, through which portion of my route lay, belongs to the Beni Lám Arabs, who are nominally subject to the Pasha of Bághdád, although that dignitary has really little influence over them. During the winter and spring months, the numerous Persian tribes of the Feylí Lúrs descend from

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their mountain fastnesses, and pasture their flocks upon the same plains. As these occupants of the country belong to distinct races, and speak different languages, distrust and warfare are of constant occurrence between them. Two feelings, however, they have in common :—intense hatred to their respective and nominal sovereigns, and bigoted intolerance towards all but their own sect of Sheah Mohammedans. Methkúr, the Beni Lám Sheikh, being considerably in arrear with his annual tribute to the Bághdád treasury, was endeavouring to elude the Pasha's messengers. 'Alí Khán, the chief of the Segwend Lúrs, was, as I have just said, in open rebellion against the new governor of Khúzistán ; he was a relative of that Kelb 'Alí Khán, who murdered our countrymen, Grant and Fotheringham, and was equally notorious for his cruelty and want of faith. Carrying with me letters to the Prince, and a large sum of ready money for the commencement of the excavations, but being without protection from any party, it must be admitted that my prospects were not very encouraging.* However, in addition to my own little staff of domestics, the Persian Commissioner, Mírza Jáfér Khán, with his usual promptitude, placed at my disposal two of his mehmendars, and I was joined by two Bakhtiyárí servants of Seyid Mustapha—an influential religious chief of Dizfúl, enjoying British protection,—one of the most daring and unscrupulous of intriguers. Thus we mustered a tolerably strong party.

Mírza Jáfér Khán had supplied me with letters to the

* I had before me Mr Layard's warning of the insecurity of the route (Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. xvi., p. 89), but there was no alternative, unless I chose to take the long journey by Busrah and up the Kárún. Any laudation from me is, I am aware, superfluous, but I cannot omit to express my sense of the value of that gentleman's geographical communication upon the region in question. It is full of the most accurate and detailed information.

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chief of all the Feylí Lúrs, but, at the conclusion of my third day's journey, the people of Baghcha-Seray, a small village on the Persian side of the frontier, refused either to admit me within their walls, or to furnish me with a guide to their chief or elsewhere. Under these circumstances, I deemed it advisable to seek the protection of the Benί Lám Sheikh, and, for this purpose, diverged towards the bank of the Tigris. Falling in with a few tents of his tribe, I obtained a guide, who undertook to conduct me to his camp, distant two days' journey, amid the sand-hills of the Tíb. It was fortunate that I took this course. Methkúr was flattered by my placing myself under his protection and guidance; while the present of a bag of coffee, and a rich piece of green silk for a dress, made him my friend and "brother," and subsequently secured me from the depredations of his whole tribe during my third residence on the mounds at Shúsh. The Benί Lám are notorious thieves, and their name is said to be derived from the following tale :—

"An ancient king, passing through the tribe, ordered each man to bring a kid's-skin full of milk to a certain place for the supply of his troops. The skins were duly brought, well filled out; but, on the milk being measured, there proved to be only half the quantity ordered. It appeared that each milkman had unwittingly stumbled upon the same expedient to cheat the troops and save his own dairy, their skins were half-filled with wind. Hence the tribe was called 'Lá'm,' the Persian for *knave* or *black-leg!*" Such, at least, is the Persian explanation.

Methkúr's protection was valid among the insurgent Segwendís, whose camp lay on my next day's journey. 'Alí Khán at first seemed disposed to be inhospitable, and, perhaps, thought what a diversion it would be to his respected followers if he gave the order for an onslaught

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on the party. His fears, or better feelings, however, prevailed, and he feasted me that night on good wheaten bread and national lamb. If any truth is to be placed in physiognomy, that of 'Alí Khán fully justified the character he received; his tribe, too, was the most extraordinary assemblage of animals bearing the human form that I ever set eyes upon. They had high shoulders, long legs, pucker-faces, and (if the Lamarckian theory of transmutation of species be true) perhaps also long tails, although I will not vouch for this fact, not having had an opportunity of making a minute zoological examination. They could not, however, have been so far advanced in the scale of progression as those men with tails, whom it is said the French naturalist, M. Castelman, heard of in Abyssinia, because the latter possessed benches with holes in them, through which they passed their tails; the Segwendís were not so civilized as even to construct a bench! Had we encountered this strange race in the deserts without Methkúr's protection, our safety would not have been valued at a straw. As it was, however, 'Alí Khán provided a guide, in addition to the Arab sent by the sheikh, and by his assistance we crossed the river Kerkhah at a dangerous ford, and ultimately arrived in safety at Dizfúl.

His Highness the Prince, since his accession of territory, had done away with the steps and stairs by which the bridge was previously crossed. He had only just departed for the Náhr Háshem, where a bund was in course of erection, for the purpose of restoring the river Kerkhah to the ancient channel past the town of Háwíza, which was abandoned by the stream in 1832. A messenger was despatched to him with my letters, and in a few days I received a reply, stating that "all my wishes should be gratified," and that he would return to Dizfúl in a few days.

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In the interim I made no secret of my intentions, but gave notice to all my visitors that the excavations were about to be resumed. At the same time I took care to exhibit the Sháh's firmán, so that the news spread like wildfire through the bazaars that the Firenghís were come again to dig for gold at Shúsh! The regular pay and circulation of money during Colonel Williams' excavations had produced an improved feeling among the lower classes towards Europeans. The Arabs, it is true, did not shew much disposition to aid me, but the agricultural Lúrs from the adjoining villages flocked in from all directions anxious for employment. The previous conduct of the Arabs on two occasions, and their present shyness, were not such inducements that I should rely upon them alone; whereas the Lúrs were strong, hardy mountaineers, accustomed and able to handle the spade. I engaged seventy at the rate of half a kerán per day, equivalent to fivepence of our money, and ascertained that, with a day's notice, two or three hundred more could be secured on the same reasonable terms. Two-thirds of the Lúrs agreed to take their own implements. Additional spades, axes, pulleys, ropes, and other necessaries were daily accumulated, and nothing was now wanting but an interview with the Prince, and his full permission to enable me to break ground without delay.

It must not be supposed that the priests and holy men of Dizfúl observed my open proceedings with favour. They used every endeavour to thwart my plans, but this was done secretly, because they knew Khánler Mírza to be no friend to their order. Since the last visit of the British Commission, cholera had committed extensive ravages throughout the province,—this was, of course, attributed by them to Colonel Williams' excavations "at Danyel!" When it became known to the mújtehid that the Lúrs were offering themselves, several

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of the poor fellows were called into his presence, and told that, if they escaped being killed by the falling of the trenches, they would assuredly die of cholera before the expiration of the year! The act of digging into those mounds was a sacrilege, and there was no hope for offenders who ventured to transgress after the priestly warning! Love of gain, however, proved infinitely more potent than the threats of the priesthood or the fear of death. When keráns became plentiful in the hands of the workmen, and were spent in the bazaars, even the green-turbaned descendants of the Prophet, seized with the general fever after wealth, forsook their usual avocations, and hastened to the trenches!

As soon as the Prince arrived at his camp on the cliff opposite to the town of Dizfúl, I received an invitation to his tent. Having had the advantage of his previous acquaintance, I was received by him in the most affable and courteous manner. The letters, of which I was the bearer, had evidently given him much pleasure. His Highness, Khánler Mírza, might then be about thirty-five years of age, and was a remarkably handsome man, although somewhat pale, the result, it was whispered, of dissipation. His intelligent features, high forehead, full black eyes, and aquiline nose, would have anywhere rendered him an object of attraction. He did not generally bear a good name, but, from circumstances which afterwards presented themselves to my notice, I arrived at the conclusion that he was an admirable governor of a Persian province, stern and unrelenting to the criminal, but usually mild and lenient towards others. If he called on his subjects for a large increase of their taxes, (the chief charge against him), it was, I would fain believe, with the intention of applying the proceeds to the public good. He was building and repairing bridges, erecting dams for the better distribution of water, and engaged in other sub-

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stantial works, which, if fully carried out, would be of the utmost consequence to the prosperity of Khúzistán. He was reported to be cruel in his punishments, but that is as much the fault of the people as of their rulers: they never have a due respect for the authority of a governor unless a few executions take place on his assumption of office. Such examples are therefore absolutely necessary to awe a province into good behavour for at least a reasonable time.

He soon introduced the name of Shúsh, and shewed that he took great interest in the excavations at the palace of "Dáráb" (as he correctly called the column bases already exposed), which he had carefully examined one day while hunting in the neighbourhood. On my stating that I had engaged some Lúrs, subject to his approval, he interrupted me, "but," said he, "you are going to pay them too much! I hear you have engaged them at a kerán a-head, because, when I wanted labourers for the bund at Náhr Háshem, they refused to come for the usual rate of pay, alleging that you were offering twice as much." I told him, with a knowing look, that he knew the people of the country better than myself, but that half-a-kerán was the sum I had agreed to give them. He fully comprehended me, and returned my look with compound interest, exclaiming, with a smile, "a kerán, indeed! The dogs' fathers never saw so much money!"

His recent visit to the bund at Náhr Háshem had evidently much annoyed him. His engineers, if such a term could be applied to the parties employed, had made a complete failure of their work, and consequently a large portion of it was carried away by a sudden rise of the river. "But," said the Prince, "before I leave Dizfúl for the mountains, inshallah! I shall have it finished!" As I rose to depart he gave me strict injunctions that, if any one misbehaved in the slightest degree, or failed to shew me the

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same deference he should himself expect if there, I should inform him without delay; if I did not, the fault would be my own. The same instructions were given to Feth Ullah Khán, one of his trusty men, whom he ordered to watch over my safety, and obey my orders.

Heavy rain prevented my leaving Dizfúl for a couple of days, after which my tents were pitched upon the north-west platform, within a few hundred feet of the column bases. My seventy workmen duly made their appearance, spade on shoulder, ready to commence operations as soon as the order should be issued. Having no tents, the sanctity of Daniel's tomb was soon violated, and its old roof rung with the chorus of wild Lúrish songs, which seventy lusty throats screeched forth untiringly.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

The Great Palace of Darius at Susa—Columns with Double-bull Capitals—Trilingual Inscriptions of Artaxerxes Mnemon—"Court of the Garden" of Esther—Columnar and Curtain Architecture—Origin of the Susian and Persepolitan Style—Worship of Tanaitis or Venus.

On looking around the vast area of mounds, and considering the small sum at my disposal for the investigation of their contents, I was almost tempted to regard my enterprize as a hopeless one. There was an exceedingly bare prospect of making any important discovery near the site of the columns already exhumed, because of the slight depth of the earth. However, with them before me, and the certainty that some other portion of the building must exist near at hand, I resolved to proceed and endeavour to ascertain the plan of the edifice to which they belonged: possibly something of interest might turn up among the fragments. There was a probability, too, that a stylobate existed, as in the palaces at Persepolis, adorned with sculptures and inscriptions. I therefore decided on driving several trenches into the mound from the edges, commencing, in the first place, near the columns. My efforts in their immediate neighbourhood* were wholly unsuccessful, but, on the first day, a trench one hundred and twenty-five feet distant, close on the north side of the platform, struck upon a large basement

* At F on the General Plan of the ruins, page 343.

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slab of blue limestone (at No. 9 on the Plan, see next page). Upon its surface could be distinctly traced a circle, eight feet four inches in diameter, a proof that it formerly supported a column of precisely similar dimensions to those already laid bare (Nos. 5, 6, 7).

From the centre of this slab, twenty-seven feet three inches were measured off on either side along the scarp of the mound, and a similar slab discovered in each position. I was not, however, equally fortunate with holes dug at the same distances from the centres of these slabs towards the centre of the mound. Colonel Williams had in like manner failed to find any indications of a second row of columns. I tried a series of holes at equal distances beyond those last made, but with no better success. Not satisfied with this, I opened a long trench from my first-discovered basement slab, passed the two holes, and, at the distance of sixty-eight feet four inches from its centre, reached a gigantic monolith pedestal. It measured eight feet square, and two feet five inches high, at which point there was a flat ledge, nine inches deep; beyond this again the monolith rose a foot higher, and was then broken off. Farther on, in the same line, with a like inter-columniation of twenty-seven feet three inches, occurred four similar square pedestals, more dilapidated than the first, and a vacant space for another, thus marking, in all, the positions of six columns.

A trench at right angles to the other, was now dug from the square base first discovered, and disclosed, at similar distances apart, four additional square pedestals on the east, and one on the west (in row 1, 3, of the Plan).

I was now satisfied that the structure was one of similar description to the so-called Great Hall of Xerxes at Persepolis. Further researches not only confirmed this impression, but proved likewise that, although the two

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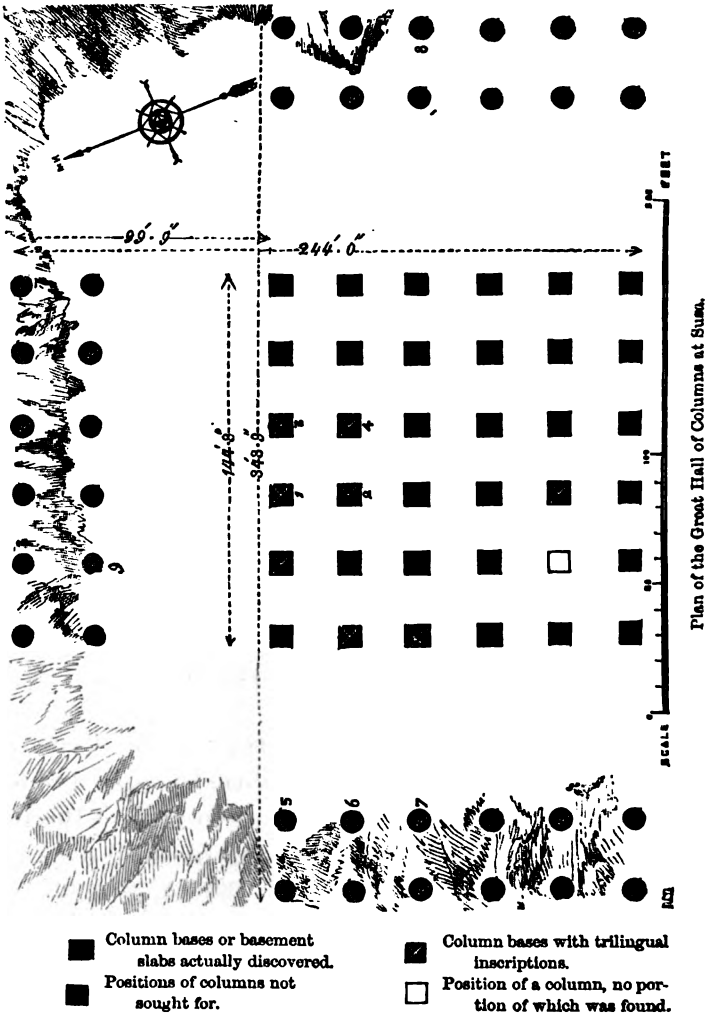
colonnades differed in details, they were erected on the same plan, and with nearly the same measurements. It is therefore natural to conclude that they were the designs of the same architect.

The accompanying ground plan of the palace at Susa serves to explain its arrangement. It may, however, be



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necessary briefly to remark, for the information of those with whom the Persepolitan structure* is not familiar, that the Great Hall at Susa consisted of several magnificent groups of columns, together having a frontage of three hundred and forty-three feet nine inches, and a depth of two hundred and forty-four feet. These groups were arranged into a central phalanx of thirty-six columns (six rows of six each), flanked on the west, north, and east, by an equal number, disposed in double rows of six each, and distant from them sixty-four feet two inches.

Of the inner phalanx the positions of twenty-one columns were determined, and many others doubtless might be discovered by excavation; but, as it was necessary to make the utmost use of my funds, I was obliged to rest satisfied with ascertaining the actual plan of the edifice.

Of the external groups, there remained on the west, three† of the inner row—the original discovery of Colonel Williams,—and a large fragment of another among the debris upon the slope of the mound. It doubtless belonged to the outer row of the same group.

Three large basement slabs of the inner row alone remained of the northern series;—but, of the eastern group, the positions of two in each row were ascertained; the rest are either still buried, or had long since fallen down the slope of the mound.

It was in consequence of the outer rows being destroyed in the western and northern groups, that neither Colonel Williams nor myself at first succeeded in finding the rest of the columns. We might have dug holes all over the

* For details regarding Persepolis and its palaces, I may refer the reader to the admirable works of Chardin, Le Brun, Niebuhr, Texier, Ker Porter, Flandin and Coste, and Fergusson.

† Numbered 5, 6, 7, on the Plan.

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mounds at twenty-seven feet three inches apart, commencing from our separate starting points, and neither of us would by this means have discovered another column! As another instance of the luck attending excavations, I may mention that Colonel Williams actually dug two trenches* between the rows of columns; whereas a few feet deviation from the straight line must have inevitably revealed one of them!

In the Great Hall at Persepolis there are clearly two orders of columns; the same coincidence obtained at Susa, but as none of the shafts remain erect at the latter locality, it is impossible to speak unhesitatingly concerning the entire details. We know for a certainty, however, that the inner phalanx possessed square bases, while those of the outer groups were bell-shaped. All the shafts were undoubtedly fluted like those at Persepolis, but beyond this point there must remain much conjecture. Strewed in inextricable confusion among the monoliths were huge portions of the fallen columns; these were so abundant that I was able to take correct measurements, and, with Mr Churchill's assistance, to restore the various details of one variety of compound capital, identical (except in a few unimportant particulars) with those in the external groups at Persepolis. This capital evidently consisted of four distinct parts, as shewn in the accompanying woodcut, which is reduced from Mr Churchill's drawings of the originals.† They are probably intended to represent the pendent leaves of the date-palm, the opening bud of the lotus flower, a series of double volutes, and certainly at the summit, two demi-bulls, between whose necks passed the beams for the support of the roof.

* Shewn at E on the General Plan.

† These drawings were extremely careful restorations of the sculptures, nothing being admitted for which there is not sufficient proof. They are now in the British Museum.

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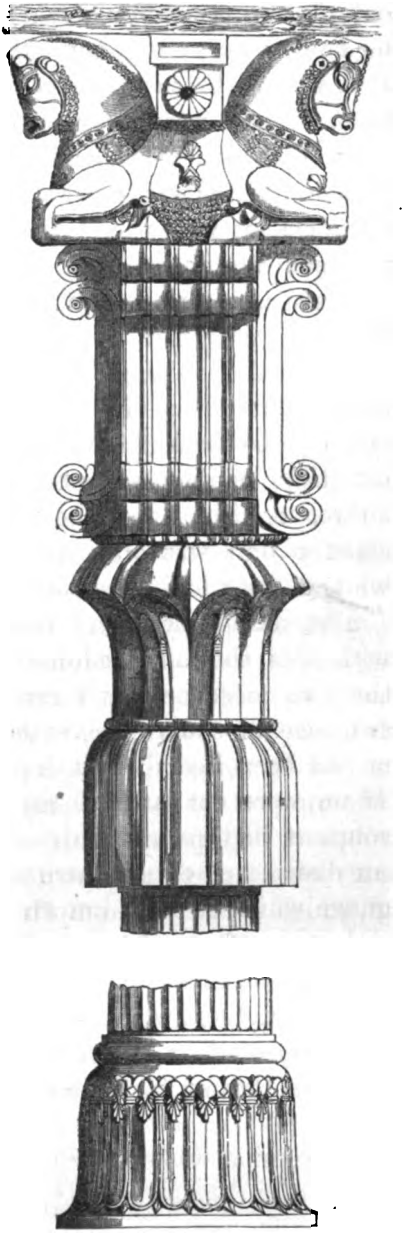
Whether any other variety of capital existed at Susa it is difficult to decide, but from the frequent repetition of the same subject among the debris of the palace, I am inclined to think that the same surmounted the top of every column. Mr Fergusson,* in his admirable attempt to restore the Persepolitan structures, rejects the drawings of Texier, Flandin and Coste, as regards the presence of the double-bull capital in the interior of the building, and remarks :—"In this, the beams running equally in four directions, a capital facing



Compound capital and base of column at Susa.†

* "Nineveh and Persepolis Restored," p. 162.

† The total height of this compound capital was 28 feet. The horns and ears of the two bulls were not found; these were let in with lead, but had disappeared. The beams represented in the woodcut are, of course, imaginary. There was no means of ascertaining the height of the fluted column, because no portion remained *in situ*. The total height of the tallest column at Persepolis is, from the floor to the architrave, 67 feet 4 inches.

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only in two is a singularly awkward expedient, as clumsy for an interior as it is appropriate for an external porch." But, nothwithstanding this opinion, the abundant fragments of broken bulls, which occur in the very centre of the great phalanx at Susa, are, I think, satisfactory proof that all the columns were surmounted by them, and I therefore quite concur with the three authors just mentioned, that the same was the case in the corresponding structure at Persepolis. It is certain, at any rate, that the northern row of the central Susian group was supplied with double bulls, because one pedestal (No. 1)* has a piece cleanly cut out of its eastern side by the perpendicular fall of the bull-capital, which could not have fallen into that position except from the column immediately above, or from the one adjoining it. The head of another bull was observed to rest against a monolith, while a body had fallen on the opposite side.

The most interesting discovery, however, connected with this columnar edifice is the fact that, in each of the two most northerly rows of the great phalanx, the two central square pedestals (Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 4) were or had been inscribed with trilingual cuneiform records. These were cut around the ledge, but the fall of the columns had so materially injured them that only one copy remained entire—written unfortunately in the language which is least known of the three. As if in anticipation of the fate which awaited the edifice, and of the prospect that one copy at least might escape the general destruction, each set of inscriptions was repeated four times. The Scythic version occupied the western side, the Persian faced towards the south, and the Babylonian pointed eastward. The fourth side was plain. Each version was deeply cut in five lines, and extended six feet four inches in length, and seven inches in breadth.

* See Ground Plan of Palace at page 366.

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Upon pedestal No 1, the Scythic version was perfect, the Persian had lost the last two lines, and the whole of the central portion in the Babylonian copy was destroyed by the fall of the bull-capital.

Of pedestal No. 3, a few characters of the Persian alone remain. The monolith No. 2, is likewise much damaged, having only fragments of the Persian and Babylonian copies still existing. It had been injured on some previous occasion, either by flaws or otherwise, because pieces of the same stone had been fitted in and secured with iron or lead, over which the inscriptions had been cut.

Of the pedestal No. 4, nothing is left but the basement slab to determine its former position. There can, however, be little doubt that it was inscribed like the others, because these four columns mark the position of the principal façade.

These records are, in many respects, highly interesting. They are the sole memorials extant of Artaxerxes Mnemon, the conqueror of the Greeks at the battle of Cunaxa, and they record the completion of the edifice, which had been commenced by Darius, the son of Hystaspes, as stated by Pliny.* This fact is important, because it enables us, with a tolerable degree of certainty, to conjecture the age of the great colonnade at Persepolis, as to which much doubt exists. It is generally supposed to have been the work of Xerxes, because it bears a commemorative tablet of that monarch; but Sir Henry Rawlinson† has suggested the probability of its original foundation by his father Darius. That such was really the case is corroborated by the general agreement in plan and measurement, as well as in the details of the

* Infra est Susiane, in quâ vetus regia Persarum Susa, à Dario Hystaspis filio condita. Liber vi., c. 27.

† Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. x., p. 271.

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Susian and Persepolitan structures. It is, I think, highly probable that they were designed by the same architect, although finished at different and distant periods.

From the perfect Scythic version of the inscriptions, aided by the Persian text, Mr Norris* suggests the following translation as not being very far from the truth :—

"Says Artaxerxes, the great king, the king of kings, the king of the country, the king of this earth, the son of king Darius :—Darius was the son of king Artaxerxes, Artaxerxes was the son of king Xerxes, Xerxes was the son of king Darius, Darius was the son of Hystaspes, the Achæmenian. Darius, my ancestor, anciently built this temple (or edifice), and afterwards it was repaired (?) by Artaxerxes, my grandfather. By the aid of Ormazd, I placed the effigies of Tanaitis and Mithra in the temple. May Ormazd, Tanaitis, and Mithra protect me, with the (other) gods (?), and all that I have done. . . . . "

Mr Norris remarks that "the loose way in which this inscription was engraved, the abnormal spelling, and the unusual forms of the letters, all combine, with grammatical inaccuracies, to throw difficulties in the way of a satisfactory explanation of that part of the inscription which follows the usual introductory phrases. The Persian text would have been of great assistance; but it unfortunately fails us where the difficulties begin, the last two lines being almost completely broken away, without leaving a single entire word."

It is probable that the orthographical inaccuracies above mentioned are the result of the language having become materially corrupted during the Achæmenian period, or between the time of Darius, surnamed Hystas-

* For further information on this subject, I must refer the reader to Mr Norris's elaborate and learned memoir "on the Scythic Inscriptions" in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xv., p. 157-162.

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pes, and Artaxerxes Mnemon,—or it may be, as Mr Norris seems to think, that these irregularities arise from a desire on the part of the writer to make the translation as literal as possible, even to the errors of the original.

There is another point which gives extreme interest to this inscription. I have elsewhere * quoted valuable authority as to the identity of Ahasuerus, the husband of Esther, with the Xerxes of Greek authors. If this be admitted, we cannot but regard the edifice in question as the actual building referred to in the following verses of Scripture :—

"The king made a feast unto all the people that were present *in Shushan the palace*, both unto great and small, seven days in *the court of the garden of the king's palace;* where were white, green, and blue hangings fastened with cords of fine linen and purple to silver rings and *pillars of marble:* the beds were of gold and silver, upon a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble." †

It was here, among the pillars of marble in the court of the garden in Shushan the palace, "when the heart of the king was merry with wine," that the order was given for queen Vashti to overstep the bounds of Oriental female modesty, and "shew the people and the princes her beauty."‡

By referring to the plan of the ruins, it will be observed that the position of the great colonnade corresponds with the account above given. It stands on an elevation in the centre of the mound, the remainder of which we may well imagine to have been occupied, after the Persian fashion, with a garden and fountains. Thus the colonnade would represent the "court of the garden of the king's palace," with its "pillars of mar-

* See note, page 339. † Esther i. 5, 6. ‡ Esther i. 10, 11.

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ble." I am even inclined to believe that the expression "Shushan the palace" applies especially to this portion of the existing ruins in contradistinction to the citadel and the city of Shushan.*

But to return once more to the excavations. In the hope of solving the difficulty as to the connexion which existed between the central and outer groups of columns, trenches were, in several instances, dug between them to ascertain if there had been any intermediate wall for the support of a roof. At that time I had not seen Mr Fergusson's valuable work, recently referred to, nor had I any indications of his theory on the subject. I had, it is true, noticed the foundations of two doorways, midway between the central group and the front portico at Persepolis; but, as these were the only indications of an existing wall at that place, I was not satisfied on the point, and determined to investigate the subject at Susa. My trenches all proved fruitless: there was not the slightest vestige of such a wall as Mr Fergusson has suggested in his restored plan † of the Persepolitan Great Hall. Although strongly inclined to adopt a similar idea, in order to make the entire structure compact, I was obliged to abandon it. If there had been any such wall at Susa, some portions of it must have been discovered, even if constructed of bricks. Mr Fergusson's argument is partly founded on the fact, that in two of the smaller palaces at Persepolis, such walls do actually remain. But this, I think, rather invalidates his theory, because, if they were not destroyed in the smaller edifices, there was less likelihood of their being carried away from the more massive buildings.

As regards Susa, however, there is, in my opinion, a strong proof that such walls did not exist. It cannot

* To this point I shall have occasion again to allude, see page 429.

† "Nineveh and Persepolis Restored," p. 144.

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otherwise be well explained why there should be no inscription on the north side of the four columns*—that side which was undoubtedly the principal front of the edifice,—except that the record might be protected from the influence of the weather. At Persepolis and Nineveh it was customary to place the commemorative records in the most conspicuous position at the entrances, and, unless for the reason above assigned, it is difficult of explanation why the same principle was not carried out at Susa. I feel therefore persuaded, notwithstanding the strong arguments which have been adduced to the contrary, that the outer groups or porticoes stood distinct from the central square of columns, or connected simply by means of curtains. It seems to be to this that reference is made in the "hangings fastened with cords to silver rings and pillars of marble" † at the feast of the royal Ahasuerus. Nothing could be more appropriate than this method at Susa and Persepolis, the spring residences of the Persian monarchs. It must be considered that these columnar halls were the equivalents of the modern throne-rooms, that here all public business was despatched, and that here the king might sit and enjoy the beauties of the landscape. With the rich plains of Susa and Persepolis before him, he could well, after his winter's residence at Babylon, dispense with massive walls, which would only check the warm fragrant breeze from those verdant prairies adorned with the choicest flowers. A massive roof, covering the whole expanse of columns, would be too cold and dismal, whereas curtains around the central group would serve to admit both light and warmth. Nothing can be conceived better adapted to the climate or the season.

The elevated position of the Great Colonnade, with the

* Numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 on the Ground Plan at page 366.

† Esther i. 6.

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somewhat abrupt edges of the mound upon which it stood, suggested the probability of a sculptured stylobate resembling that at Persepolis. Without a massive support of some description, the immense superincumbent weight of the columns must have necessarily caused the platform to give way at the edges. Several trenches were therefore dug on all sides, but without the discovery of the smallest fragment of sculpture. At the north-west corner, however, on the edge of the platform,* and at the depth of about fifteen feet, there occurred a block of large bricks, set in bitumen, evidently the foundation of a strong wall. I therefore conclude that the platform was sustained by a brick wall, and that neglect in repairing it, or wanton removal of the bricks, produced the destruction of the whole edifice. The absence of bas-reliefs at Susa need, however, be no cause of surprise. Nineveh and Persepolis are situated in localities producing the stone of which the edifices are constructed. Susa, on the contrary, stands on a gravel plain, thirty miles removed from the nearest point whence building stone is procurable.†

The habitable portion of the Susian palace, erected by Darius and his successors, undoubtedly stood on the south of, and immediately behind the columnar hall. Traces of brick walls were there uncovered, but, the depth of earth being so shallow above them, it was useless to excavate further in that quarter.

The similarity between the buildings of Persepolis and Susa is so great that any peculiarity observable in the one will equally illustrate the architecture of the other.

* At F on the General Plan.

† The dark blue limestone of the Susa monoliths is extremely hard and difficult to work. In parts, however, its texture is slaty, and to this cause may be attributed, in some degree, the destruction of the columns. It was most likely obtained from the valley of the river Kerkhah, near Púl-i-Tang, or from the adjoining range of the Kebír Kúh, whence it must have been conveyed on rafts to Susa.

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Even if not erected by the same architect, they were the works of the same dynasty, and they proceeded from one source. They form a distinct style of architecture, and it now becomes necessary to offer a few remarks upon it.

The large hollow member with leafy ornaments—forming, as it were, the cornice of certain Persepolitan structures—is nowhere else observable except in the ruined edifices which line the banks of the Nile, or deck the Egyptian plains; but the palaces of the Achæmenian kings lack the massiveness which is the grand characteristic of Egyptian buildings. The bulls of Persepolis and Susa remind us at once of their prototypes in the Assyrian palaces: the flutings of the columns are almost counterparts of the delicate chasings of the Greek pillars, whilst the palm-ornaments of the capitals point to the fallen empires whose splendour once mirrored itself, even as their ruins are now reflected, in the waters of the lower Tigris and Euphrates. It is worthy of notice, however, that the palaces of Susa and Persepolis are much inferior to those which they resemble in the several empires whose remains are still preserved to us, and that, far from being (as M. Flandin remarks, in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*) "worthy to be classed with Greek art," they were rather the works of a powerful monarch, who wanted the skill and taste to direct the labour which his power commanded. Such a one was Darius, the son of Hystaspes, who, having subdued a people which had suffered the luxury of art to rust its sword, was ambitious, "by the grace of Ormazd, who had brought help to him," to make his palaces outshine, by prodigality of ornament, those of the nations he had conquered, and to "engrave with an iron pen in the rock for ever," in commendable simplicity, the record of his deeds. The purity and artistic feelings of the vanquished he could not transplant, nor perhaps even appreciate. It may

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have contented him to borrow forms indiscriminately from all, so that each of the hundred columns* surrounding his throne might bear upon its fluted shaft the lotus, the palm, and the bull, and symbolize the glories which the vigorous arms of the Persian had gathered upon the battle-fields of Egypt, Assyria, Greece, and Babylonia.

The earliest specimen of the Achæmenian structures is at Múrgháb—the ancient Passargadæ—which likewise bears the earliest cuneatic record of that dynasty by Cyrus the Great. As it is pretty generally admitted that this alphabet was adopted from subjected nations, and as it is invariably connected with their architecture, both at Persepolis and Susa, it rather adds confirmation to the view here taken as to the origin of these unique specimens of the building art.

In the inscription, upon the monolithic bases of Artaxerxes Mnemon, we read that he raised a statue in honour of the goddess Tanaitis,† or Venus; it is interesting to corroborate this worship, by means of excavations in a different part of the ruins. In a trench,‡ twenty-two feet deep, at the south-west corner of the great platform, was discovered a collection of about two

* The Great Palace at Persepolis, it is well known, is, *more Persarum*, called "Chehil Minár," "The Hundred Columns," although it only possessed seventy-two.

† Tanaitis is certainly the Assyrian Anaitis, the Persian Anahid, the Phœnician Tanith, and the Greek Τανάϊς of some MSS. at least. The Persian version of the record still shews a part of the name "*—nahata;*" the Babylonian has *Anakhitu*. The Scythic word may be read *Tanata*. The inscriptions confirm the statement of Plutarch, that Tanata was worshipped in the time of Artaxerxes Mnemon. It has been usual, in printed Greek works, to alter the name of Tanata, or Τανάϊς, to Ἀναΐτις; but the Phœnician *Tanith*, the present inscription, and the authority of good MSS. of Strabo, shew that Τανάϊς was equally admissible; and, if the very probable conjecture of Gesenius as to the identity of Tanata and the Egyptian goddess Neith be correct, the reason of the variation is plain, *ta* being merely the Egyptian feminine article. See Mr Norris' Memoir on Scythic Inscriptions, Journal of Royal Asiatic Society, vol. xv., p. 160.

‡ K on Plan.

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hundred terra-cotta figures, the greater number of which were nude representations of the goddess. Venus was especially worshipped at Babylon, and her clay models are

Clay figures of Venus from Susa.

among the most common of those found throughout Babylonia. Those discovered at Susa are altogether of a different type, and exhibit some remarkable peculiarities, shewn in the woodcut.

The hands, as usual, hold the breasts, as emblems of fruitfulness ; the features are very carefully moulded, and present a decidedly Assyrian profile ; the hair is clipped close to the forehead, like the modern fashion of the Persian women ; and the head-dress is high and projecting, like the cap frequently worn by Jewish ladies in the East. The ears, neck, wrists, and ankles are adorned with their appropriate ornaments. The features and headdress are perfectly different from any found elsewhere. There was evidently a great demand for these statuettes, which were cast from several moulds, and it appeared as though the trench had descended into the image-maker's store. In an adjoining trench,* was recovered

* J on Plan.

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one of the clay moulds in which the figures were cast.*

There occurred also, in the same trench, other male and female figures, playing on instruments resembling the native zantúr, together with several primitive representations of domestic animals—the Indian bull, the sheep, and horse.

* In a small chamber, in the south-east palace at Nimrúd, I discovered a large collection of very beautiful ivories, among which were a great variety of nude figures, frequently in the same posture as those above described. In several instances, they composed groups as column shafts. From the frequency of their occurrence, I concluded that they had formed part of an ornamental shrine dedicated to Venus. Short accounts of these ivories, with figures of the most remarkable, are contained in the *Literary Gazette* of April 5, 1856, and in the *Illustrated London News* of April 12, 1856. The originals are in the British Museum.

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CHAPTER XXIX.

Hostility and Reconciliation—An Arrival—The Lúr Workmen—Insurrection of Seyids—Administration of Justice—Novel Method of Smoking—Colonel Williams' Horses Stolen—An Arab attack Repelled—The Haughty Humbled—Besieged by a Hárem.

It must not be supposed that the progress of the excavations was unattended with difficulty and annoyance. On quitting Dizfúl for the ruins, the services of only seventy Lúrs were secured, under the impression that, as soon as the work began, many Arabs would be induced to offer themselves. In this, however, I was disappointed, and the letters furnished me by Khánler Mírza failed to produce the desirable result; the 'Alí Kethír were not to be moved from their obstinate determination. Sheikh Ghafil, the chief of the whole tribe, whose tents were situated about three miles from the mounds, was especially directed to see to my safety, and to supply me with workmen; but his remark, on reading the Prince's letter, was to the effect that he would not send men—"the Sháh-záda (Prince) might cut him and his tribe to pieces; his sons and wives were the Prince's, but he would not send a man to dig at Shúsh for a Firenghí!" With his rival, Sheikh Mahommed,* encamped with his

* The 'Alí Kethír Arabs are divided into thirty-one tribes, of which the Cherím, Anafíja, Chá'b, and Má'la are the only large ones. At the time of my visits to Susa, Ghafil was sheikh of the first, and Mahommed-em-Meshál of the last.

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people a short distance from the mounds on the opposite side of the Sháour, there was no better success. His reply to my demand for workmen was the question, "how the Prince permitted a Ghyáwr to excavate at Shúsh!" From another camp it was stated that my groom was driven with sticks and stones while endeavouring to purchase corn for my horses. A general feeling prevailed that the recent visit of cholera to the province, was the consequence of Colonel Williams' excavations, and that it would return again with tenfold violence, at this second act of impiety! It soon became evident that, unless means were taken to prevent it, I should be exposed to gross insult. The opportunity was not long in occurring, and eventually turned to my advantage.

On the third day after my tents were pitched at Shúsh and the works in full operation, Sheikh Mahommed's brother, with about a dozen of his people, presented themselves at a trench where I was watching the workmen extracting pieces of fluted columns. Salutations were expressly made to the Lúrs, under the designation of "Dizfúlí," for the undoubted purpose of excluding me. At first I took no notice of this conduct, regarding the visitors as ignorant Arabs; but when they followed me about from trench to trench, behaving in the same manner at each, and holding conversations among themselves concerning "the beast, the pig," &c., it was evident that a direct insult was intended towards myself. To have submitted tamely would have been productive of continued annoyance; I therefore insisted on their leaving the trenches until they had learned to treat me with common respect. They were not prepared for this high tone from a Christian, and therefore took their departure with strong signs of surprise and disgust. Determined to strike the iron while hot, I despatched the Prince's man to Sheikh Mahommed, demanding an apology for this

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gratuitous insult on the part of his brother. On the following day, Mahommed himself sought an interview, and begged that the offender might be forgiven. "He is an Arab," said he, "and knows no better." His brother also confessed that he had acted with great impropriety, but was sorry for his behaviour. Thus an excellent opportunity arose for conciliating my nearest neighbours, and at the same time of explaining that I had no desire they should act contrary to their prejudices in working at the excavations. To prove that I possessed due and proper authority for my proceedings, the Sháh's firmán was exhibited. Sheikh Mahommed received this precious document standing; he carefully examined the seal, kissed it, muttered a prayer, and then placed it reverently on his head. It was then handed to his brother, who did likewise.

The old man's quiet demeanour and pleasant countenance were a strong contrast to the roughness and ill-looks of his tribe, and the interview between us evidently told likewise in my favour. He became particularly communicative, and, from that day, he and his brother were my stanch friends. With the exception of excavating in the mounds, they willingly aided me in anything I might require, and, during my stay, I was obliged to them both for many acts of assistance and friendly feeling.

A few days after this interview I was enabled to test this newly formed friendship. A scrap of paper was one morning put into my hands, addressed in European handwriting to Colonel Williams, with the intimation that the writer waited a reply on the opposite side of the Kerkhah. It proved to be from Lieutenant Jackson, I.N., who was on his way to join the English party. He had recently arrived from Bombay, and went to Bághdád in expectation of finding Colonel Williams at Mendelí, but, being too late to overtake him there, he set out

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once more on the Tigris, hoping to reach his chief at Háwíza. The native boat, in which he took passage, as bad luck would have it, ran aground. Eighteen days elapsed, and, there being no chance of the vessel floating until the annual rise of the river, the voyager decided on making his way overland. He fortunately made the acquaintance of a Bení Lám sheikh, who hospitably undertook to see him safely to the banks of the Kerkhah. In passing the Segwend Lúrs, one of their tushmáls, or chiefs, swore that, but for his protector, his life would have been the penalty for his temerity in venturing among them ; in token of the truth of which assertion he inhospitably turned the unlucky traveller out of his tent into the rain, leaving him to find shelter elsewhere. After various other adventures, he at length succeeded in gaining the bank of the Kerkhah, where the Arabs refused to provide him with skins to form a raft. He wisely wrote to the elchi, who, he understood, was digging up piles of gold and silver cups at Shúsh ! An application from me to Sheikh Mahommed was instantly attended to ; sheepskins were collected from the women, and in a few hours my friend was safely and gladly lodged in my tent.

Sheikh Mahommed's camp was my farmyard ; it supplied barley and straw for my animals, and every species of Arab luxury for our own sustenance. And yet, although my immediate neighbours now behaved so well, others at a greater distance exhibited less friendly disposition towards my party. Whenever any Lúrs were caught straying far from the mounds, or were engaged in cutting wood on the banks of the Sháour, they were attacked, and not unfrequently some awkward wounds were inflicted. On one occasion a workman was carried into camp speared in a frightful manner by a party of Arabs. In order to suppress such outrages, it became necessary

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to organise well-armed foraging parties, who were accompanied by a chief answerable to me for the behaviour of his men. This had a good effect, and the cowardly attacks ceased.

Having satisfactorily ascertained that it was useless expecting the Arabs to aid me, I determined on increasing my force by engaging men in Dizfúl. It soon became known that workmen were required, and the mounds were besieged by applicants; no farther difficulty was experienced in raising three hundred and fifty men. The principal number were Lúrs, but many were a mixed race from the town,—half Lúr, half Arab, hating the Frank, but greedy for his keráns. This additional force was distributed at various positions on the mounds, as indicated by the coloured lines on the general plan of the ruins. The men were divided into gangs; the strong Lúrs used the long-handled spades of the country, and, like Irish "navvies," threw the earth high out of the open trenches, while the town's-people, less accustomed to such hard work, filled baskets, and hoisted the loose earth from the tunnels by means of pullies. None could, however, forget the predictions of the priests, that some accident would inevitably befall the sacrilegious wretches who dared to assist the operations of the Ghyáwr. In order to avert this supposed danger, the party at each trench elected a mulla—one of themselves—who every now and then extemporized a prayer, calling on 'Alí to save and defend them from all ills likely to arise from digging at Shúsh, and receiving the wages of an infidel, "*whom might 'Alí curse.*" Each invocation was loudly responded to by three earnest cries of "Yá, 'Alí!" (Oh, 'Alí).* The echo was taken up by the adjoining trench,

* It will be remembered that 'Alí is the patron saint of the Persians. The names of Allah (God) or Mohammed are seldom invoked by them, as they are by the Turks and Arabs of the Sunní sect.

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and the mounds, from end to end, constantly resounded with this oft-repeated prayer.

The accession of Dizfúlís to the excavations was, in one respect, unwelcome: they brought bigotry along with them. The Lúrs were tolerant; they chiefly belonged to that extraordinary sect called 'Alí Iláhís,* who believe that the Deity has vouchsafed to man a thousand and one successive incarnations of the godhead, and that the most perfect development of his presence took place in Benjamin, David, and 'Alí.

The Seyids, or descendants of the Prophet, were, as I have said, induced at last to overcome their scruples, and I was surprised one morning to see no less than seventeen green-turbaned individuals, from Dizfúl, ranged before my tent door. If they had not been armed with spades,

* Very little is really known of this singular sect. It is extremely difficult to ascertain what are the tenets of their religion, because they are very jealous of inquiry concerning this subject, although tolerant of other opinions. From their many Jewish names and general physiognomy, it is supposed by some travellers that they are of Israelitish descent. Their religion appears to be a mixture of Jewish, Sabæan, Christian, and Mohammedan belief. Their great holy place is the tomb of Bába-Yadgar, on the mountain fort of Ban Zárda, near Zoháb, which was at one time regarded as the abode of Elias. In 1851, I spent some months among the 'Alí Iláhís of Kirrind, but can add little to what we previously knew concerning them. They say to Christians: "Our religion differs but little from yours! we drink wine, eat pig, and are not obliged, like the Mohammedan, to pray." The men of Kirrind are brave and handsome, and the women fair and good-looking. The holiday-dress of the latter consists of a bright-coloured short jacket of velvet, having a lappet in front, and the breast laced like the Swiss costumes of Berne and Lucerne. They mix freely with the men of their tribes, and are less particular than Mohammedan ladies in covering their faces. In fact, at their weddings, only ladies who are "engaged" are required to conceal their features, which is done by throwing a kerchief over the head. The Kirrindís follow the profession of their Deity Dáwud (David), who is said to have been a blacksmith; their iron-work is deservedly celebrated throughout Persia. To escape persecution, the 'Alí Iláhís profess Islámism when they descend into the plains, but in the mountains they feel free to follow their own opinions. For further information concerning this sect, consult the "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. ix., p. 36.

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I might have imagined them to be a deputation from the mújtehid, with orders to put a stop to my proceedings. Several of these gentry were placed together in one trench, but so many green turbans in close proximity could not fail to produce mischief! They were very obstinate, and frequently refused to obey instructions.

One day my servant, carrying them a message, was attacked with very abusive language by the mulla of the party. On its being repeated, Ovannes struck the holy man a violent blow, whereon the latter raised his spade, and endeavoured viciously to cut the other down, calling on his fellow saints to resent the insult inflicted on one of their number :—"A Seyid! a descendant of the Prophet, to be struck by a Ghyáwr! Will *you* suffer this? Seyids! aid me, in the name of 'Alí!" Watching the whole scene from the summit of the great mound, and fearing worse might ensue, I ran to the spot just in time to save Ovannes a blow, which would inevitably have cleft his skull, and wrenched the implement from the fellow's hand, as he still more vehemently raised his outcry against myself. On refusing either to be pacified or to quit the trench, I bestowed his own epithets upon himself, together with a succession of hearty kicks each time he opened his mouth to call on his brother Seyids to "exterminate the Ghyáwrs!" As soon as he was fairly driven off the mound, I returned to the trench and told his fraternity that this summary punishment to one of the order was inflicted out of no disrespect towards themselves; but, so long as they worked for me, I insisted on being obeyed, and would submit to no insolence or bigotry. This example had the desired effect; from that moment my influence, like that of every stern governor, small or great, in Persia, was established. It was soon discovered that the Ghyáwr could act impartially, and be just in his dealings. My decision was frequently appealed to in

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matters of dispute, and on some occasions the whole of the workmen assembled to ask advice.

They all huddled together at night into Daniel's tomb, and their wild songs resounded through the solitude of the ruins, sometimes interrupted by loud cries of "Ya! 'Alí." On a few grand occasions the exterior of the building was illuminated. Lamps were placed at intervals around the edges of the veranda and terrace, as well as upon the spire of the penetralia, the effect of which was very striking,—the white spire of the edifice seemed to be semi-transparent.

Every man took care to receive his own wages, and to secure them in his own private bank—his girdle—honesty not being a distinguishing characteristic of the Persian race. A Lúr was one night caught in the act of robbing his next neighbour, and, the keráns being found upon his person, he could not do otherwise than confess his guilt. Next morning he was brought to me by the whole of the workmen to be punished. I offered to send him into Dizfúl to be submitted to the tender mercies of the authorities. "No! No!" was the general cry, "Punish him here! Punish him here!" The culprit stepped forward and repeated the request, kneeling down and kissing my feet! The reason of this was soon explained. If the man were sent to Dizfúl, he would not only have the soles of his feet beaten to a jelly, but the keráns, the cause of the dire offence, would, by some magical process or other, disappear into the pockets of the jailers, and probably an additional sum be filched from both parties concerned. To avoid this, it was agreed, in full conclave, to ask me to distribute justice; therefore, to satisfy all parties, I consented to the arrangement. The stolen money was duly paid over to the proper owner, and twenty blows were inflicted on the person of the criminal, after which he was dismissed the service—not, however,

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before he had kissed my feet; after which the whole party proceeded to their trenches, exclaiming:—"This is something like justice! where shall we get such justice in Persia!"

After these little episodes, order and regularity were fully established in the trenches, the only variation to our day's labour being when Sheikh Ghâfil, Mohammed, or a neighbouring chief came to look and wonder, and depart; or when a general distribution of tobacco took place in return for a hard day's work, or an extraordinary piece of good fortune.

An occasional present of tobacco produced an exhilarating effect upon the excavators; without making the frantic demonstrations of the Mádán Arabs on the banks of the Euphrates, the Lúrs dug to desperation, and yelled forth their strange mountain cries, amidst incessant calls on the ubiquitous 'Alí. Having but few pipes, they adopted a primitive and ingenious method of inhaling the magic cloud. With a little water, the earth at the edge of the trench was converted into a tenacious paste; two holes were made in it having an underground communication between them of three or four inches in length. The tobacco was then placed in one hole, and, at the other, they, one after the other, applied their lips and sucked till all was dry. The mouth-piece of this novel pipe was frequently made inside the trench, and much resembled a fungus adhering to the wall. It was very amusing when a fresh "kaliyún" was lighted, to see them standing in a circle waiting their turn, while one of the number knelt in the centre with his mouth to the earth sucking until quite blue in the face with the exertion.

I had just succeeded in overcoming the scruples and gaining the confidence of the workmen, when the British Commissioner and a part of his suite, after completing the survey of the southern portion of the frontier, spent

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a few days with me on their way northward. An event then took place which threatened to put a somewhat premature stop to the excavations.

On the second night of their arrival, two horses were skilfully stolen from the encampment, and strong suspicions attached to a sheikh named Rizáz, belonging to the Chá'b* division of the 'Alí Kethír Arabs, who had only pitched their tents the day before on the bank of the Kerkhah: the stolen horses were heard galloping towards them, and shortly afterwards their dogs barked vehemently. Information of the theft was immediately communicated to the Prince, and very early the second morning after the robbery, Colonel Williams set out *en route* for Mendelí, leaving Mr Jackson with me to await the arrival of Lieutenant Glascott from Shúster. Breakfast was just finished when I was apprized that four hundred armed Arabs, headed by Abdullah, the sheikh of the suspected Chá'b, were approaching the mounds. When the sheikh expressed a wish to see me, not knowing the object, nor liking the advent of such a host of light-fingered gentry, some of my people, without my knowledge, desired him to leave his followers outside the camp. With this request he abruptly declined to comply, insisting that they should pass through the camp, and remarking that his Arabs were as clean as Firenghís.

The admission of the *posse comitatus* was stoutly refused, and high words ensued between the parties. Ovannes instantly hastening to the spot, invited the sheikh and the elders of the tribe to my tent, but asked him, as a favour, to call a halt of their attendants. The sheikh passionately replied by denouncing him as a

* These Arabs are not to be confounded with the great tribe of the Chá'b, although they may probably have originally emigrated from it to the 'Alí Kethír.

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Firenghí dog, which was the signal for a general attack on my people with clubs and sticks, a gun being fired by way of intimidation. The Lúrs now took part in the affray. Delighted at the opportunity of facing the tribe which had but recently almost murdered one of their party, they swarmed from the trenches, and rushed to the attack, howling and yelling with right good will, every man armed with a spade, pickaxe, or other weapon; their guns being fortunately left in the tomb. The battle now became general. The Arabs—chiefly armed with sticks, and perhaps not relishing the aspect of the sharp glittering spades, or not aware of our numbers which now amounted to three hundred and seventy—slowly retreated under cover of an incessant shower of broken bricks.

All this had taken place in a few minutes, before it was possible to comprehend the affair; but, having no desire to be the cause of a blood-feud, or to risk the prosecution of the excavations, I ran to the scene of combat, and used my best endeavours to maintain peace. The Lúrs, after much difficulty, were persuaded to a halt, and obey discipline. Having so far succeeded, I advanced alone towards the Arabs, calling on the sheikh who rode in the rear to come forward and speak to me. A shower of bricks and a volley of bullets—for they had about fifty guns among them—was the return for my pains, but these were fortunately discharged without effect. The indignant Lúrs again rushed forward, and were again checked by my interference. The same order of events occurred thrice. Just as they were quieted on the last occasion, an outcry arose that the Arabs had seized and were murdering a Lúr. There was no time to lose;—the Arabs were again regaining courage, and preparing to advance on seeing our halt, when I gave the word for a general charge down the mound. The enemy declined close con-

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tact with the spades, and made a hasty retreat to the ford over the Sháour, keeping up a running fight with bricks, their stock of powder being by this time exhausted. As soon as they reached the river, the Lúrs were brought to a halt once more, and I walked with Mr Jackson and Ovannes to the bank. On beckoning the sheikh to speak with me, he menacingly shook his stick, and, as no expostulation had any effect in producing an explanation, I told him he must take the consequences of this unjustifiable assault on his own shoulders; then turning away, I retired unmolested by the Arabs, many of whom were performing a species of demoniacal dance around me. A messenger was soon on his way with an account of the whole proceedings to Colonel Williams. The only explanation to be offered as to the sheikh's conduct is, that not aware of the Commissioner's departure, he had come with the intention of insulting him for charging the Chá'b tribe with the theft of the horses. If his visit were intended as a mark of respect, he would have kept his people out of my camp.

The Prince was highly enraged on hearing from Colonel Williams the account of the attack, and instantly commanded Sheikh Ghafil to secure and send his subordinate to Dizfúl—a task easier said than done—for, within twenty hours after the occurrence, Abdullah and the Chá'b were on their way to seek refuge among the marshes of the Kerkhah beyond Háwíza. The plains, which the day before were thickly dotted with black tents and herds of buffaloes, were now deserted,—not an Arab was visible,—nothing but an expanse of verdant meadow of the richest green was apparent as far as the eye could span. Ghafil was now in a dilemma; in accordance with Persian custom, he was answerable for the conduct of the whole 'Alí Kethír, and bound to produce Abdullah. He being, however, beyond reach,

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his relatives were instantly seized and lodged in prison.

Ghâfil and a party of sheikhs soon honoured me with a visit, but their previously haughty and threatening mien was lowered: the men, who had before drawn their swords and insulted the Ghyâwr, were now anxious to shew their deference; each, as he entered the tent, bowed his head low, and insisted on kissing the hand of the previously despised infidel. Many were the excuses and entreaties offered on behalf of the culprit; but nothing would move my compassion, because I conceived it a duty to future travellers that the matter should not be lightly passed over. Unless the Arabs were now made to respect the European, it might fare ill with the next visitor to the ruins. At my intercession, however, the relations of Sheikh Abdullah were released from prison, it being manifestly unfair that the innocent should be punished for the guilty.

Not succeeding in his entreaties, Sheikh Ghâfil took a sorrowful leave, declaring that he would shortly return with his hárem, under the impression that woman's prayers would prevail over my stubborn resolution. He kept his word. In a few hours, I was surprised at seeing a long line of females approaching in single file towards my tent, headed by the sheikh himself and a black eunuch. The ladies were all richly dressed, their faces scrupulously concealed under black horsehair masks. But I at once declined to receive them, and threatened to quit my tent if they persisted in approaching. Finding me so determined, they halted, but Ghâfil now declared they should not depart until I yielded. This was attempting to storm the fortress in a way not calculated upon; but, being resolved to stand the siege, I ordered a tent to be pitched for the accommodation of the Amazons, and all supplies which they might need to be provided

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for them. The black eunuch took up his appointed station in a broiling sun, midway between the besiegers and besieged, and acted as the advanced corps of observation. All communication between the two forces was held through his instrumentality; messages and presents alike passed through him from camp to camp.

In the evening, Sheikh Ghâfil, without a word, took his departure, leaving his hárem to continue a hopeless task; but on the following day he returned with a prisoner—a poor labourer caught ploughing his fields—and represented him as the man who commenced the attack. With his wretched victim he departed for Dizfúl, impressed with the idea that this great show of activity and zeal would bring about the desired result more speedily than his besieging army, which was henceforth withdrawn.

He was, however, still mistaken; Sheikh Abdullâh, and no other, would satisfy my demand. Such being the case, another stratagem was attempted. A Persian, representing himself as an officer of the Prince's, made his appearance with the offending sheikh, pretending that he was ordered to bring the fellow for me to punish as I might please; but the real fact most probably was, that he had entered into a compact with his prisoner, hoping to beg him off on condition of a liberal reward for his intercession. Some such agreement evidently existed, because, on my declining to listen to the advocate, they set out on the road to Dizfúl; it was subsequently stated that Abdullah had made his escape, and that a large body of Chá'b was in ambush by the way, prepared to rescue their chief if I had actively moved in the matter. He once more made off into the marshes, and did not again trouble me during my further stay; Sheikh Ghâfil, however, in his own behalf, continued to importune me for his friend's pardon whenever he paid me a visit.

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The stolen horses were ultimately traced to the camp of my worthy friend Methkúr, the chief of the Beni Lám, whose own brother proved to have been the accomplished thief! True to the compact made with myself, my goods and chattels were held sacred by his tribe; but, having made no stipulation on behalf of Colonel Williams, the other property of the commission was regarded as a fair object for plunder! The Prince wrote to Methkúr, requiring him to deliver up the horses into my charge; while the 'Alí Kethír, in whose territories they were lost, were compelled to provide others of equal value in exchange! Thus was the matter of the theft arranged; but the more serious affair of the Chá'b attack still remained to be dealt with.

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CHAPTER XXX.

A Long Trench—Enamelled Bricks—Masons' Marks—A Hoard of Coins—Was Susa destroyed by Alexander?—Greek Inscriptions—Pythagoras and the Persian Daric—Unexpected Visit from the Guardian of the Tomb—Inscriptions and other Early Relics on the Great Mound—Alabaster Vases of Xerxes—Egyptian Cartouch—Mr Birch's Remarks thereon—Sculptured Trough.

EXCAVATIONS were now vigorously carried on in the three principal mounds. In a regularly formed portion of the platform south-west of the colonnade of Artaxerxes, a trench* was dug diagonally across the mound, from one side to the other. At the depth of eleven feet, it struck upon a brick pavement, evidently connected with the palace, probably a court. On its surface were numerous pieces of fallen walls built of moulded composition bricks, many of which exhibited portions of glazed, coloured figures and designs in high relief, but, being on a large scale, it was impossible to understand their import or to fit the fragments to each other. Among some smaller designs was frequently repeated the symbol of the Deity—a dotted ball with expanded wings,—the colours being much varied and in a good state of preservation. There was also the rosette ornament, which occurs so abundantly and was so universal a favourite throughout edifices of the same period at Nineveh, Persepolis, and Susa.† From the position in which these

* At I on the Plan.

† Specimens of these enamelled bricks are in the British Museum.

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glazed bricks lay, it would appear that the wings of the great palace at Susa were ornamented externally in this style, and hence we may attach some credit to the statements of the ancient historians * that the walls of edifices in Babylon and Ecbatana in Media were adorned with gorgeously-coloured representations of various subjects. The shallowness of the trench, and the overturned condition of the brickwork, induced me to cease minute researches at the north side of the mound.

There is another point connected with these enamelled bricks of some interest. Upon their upper surface is generally one, and sometimes two or three peculiar characters. They are of different kinds, as shewn in the accompanying list. Those in the lines, No. 1, were merely scratches made with a knife or sharp instrument while the composition was soft. The second series of marks is the most interesting. They are small, but very carefully formed, near the front edge of each brick, generally with dark-coloured enamel, and are apparently intended to indicate the upper side of the design in front. The marks in the columns, No. 3, were rudely laid on in glaze with a brush or stick. As they do not belong to any known language, the inference is that these characters are merely builders' marks. †

* Diodorus Siculus, lib. ii., c. 20. Herodotus, lib. i., c. 98. The large number of enamelled bricks discovered in Mr Layard's excavations at the Kasr mound, Babylon, led him to the same conclusion at that locality. In Assyria, glazed bricks are an important feature in the front of the city gateways still standing at Khorsábád, but it is to be doubted if the external walls of Assyrian palaces were adorned in the same manner throughout. They may have been painted but not enamelled. I laid bare three sides of the north palace at Koyunjuk, but without observing any trace of colour upon them.

† Marks of similar kind occur upon many ancient stone buildings in the East—as at Takht i Suleyman, near Persepolis; at the base of the sculptured rock of Bisutún; in blocks near the Zenderúd and in the garden of the Chehil Sitún; at Isfahán; and especially on the walls of Al Hádhr, near Mosul. It is not improbable that those observed at the Chehil Sitún were de-

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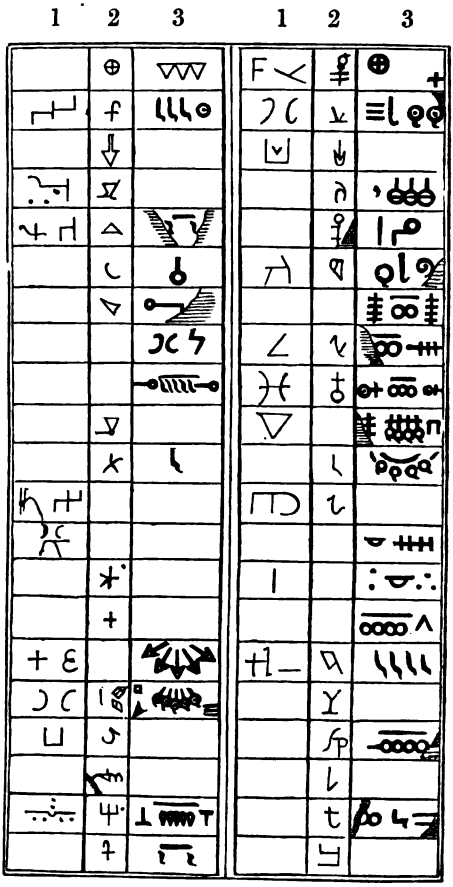
With regard to others of similar kind elsewhere, it has been suggested that they are the marks of Chaldæan



Marks on composition bricks at Susa.

masons. However this may be, it is curious to find them existing on edifices far apart, and erected at various periods from 335 B.C. to the end of the sixteenth century of our era. With the above observations, I leave them to the examination of philologists.

rived from more ancient structures erected by Ardeshír Babegán about 230 A.D.

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The frequency of these bricks, and the occurrence, from time to time, of a piece of inscribed plaster, or small column base with trilingual characters, induced me to continue this trench * five hundred feet to the opposite side of the mound. Not far from its southern extremity, on the edge of the platform, where the depth of earth above the pavement did not exceed six feet, an interesting discovery was made. I was at the time engaged in examining some recent acquisitions from another part of the ruins, when one of my master workmen rushed into the tent, every muscle of his face distorted with mingled expressions of astonishment, delight, fear, and anxiety, while he threw down at my feet as many silver Kúfic coins as his two hands could contain, rushing out again with an intimation that there were more, in the trench, which he could not carry.

The workmen had come upon a small glazed pot during the temporary absence of their overseer. As it felt extremely heavy, the cupidity of the Persians tempted them to break it, when out rolled the coins and a general scramble took place. The master-workman, however, being responsible for the rest, secured as many as he could, and honestly delivered them up to me. He was delighted at the discovery, but afraid of the result, doubting whether the Prince ought not to receive the treasure, and at the same time aware that his men had taken care of themselves. Ovannes was immediately sent to look after them, and presently returned with fifty more coins, laughing at the credulity of the Lúrs. With ready wit, he hinted that I had found an account of the number, and that several were missing. He therefore recommended the men to produce them, because, if sold in Dizfúl, the fact would reach the Prince's ears, and the sellers be punished. They looked at each other.

* At I on the Plan.

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At length, one more timid than the rest pulled forth a coin, and his example was followed by all. Some handed out one, some two or three, and so on, until fifty were collected. Still my factotum was not satisfied; when the day's work was over, he obliged each man to declare by the head of 'Alí, by Bábá Búzúrg,* and all his favourite saints, that he had no more coins in his possession. Those who refused the oath were to receive none of the tobacco about to be distributed in honour of the discovery. In this manner eleven other coins were recovered that evening, and, by dint of perseverance, about one hundred and seventy were in all collected. Several were cohering together at the bottom of the jar in a hard, solid mass, but the greater number were bright and unworn, as though but recently struck off the die. They proved to belong to the Ommiad Khálífs, who date from Abdal-Malek 79 A.H. to Heshám 106 A.H., corresponding with the years A.D. 698–728.†

* Bábá Búzúrg (great father) is a celebrated saint of the 'Alí Iláhí calendar. The shrine of this deity is situated in the mountainous region between Dizfúl and Khorremábád, in Lúristán.

† I am indebted to Mr Vaux, of the British Museum, for the determination of the mint-marks and dates of these coins contained in the following list:—

Damascus,	A.H.	79, 82, 83, 84, 86—100, 105–6.
Busrah,	„	80–82, 87.
Wáset,	„	88, 94, 99, 105, 108.
Sús (Susa),	„	90.
Rey,	„	90.
Herát,	„	90.
Teimár,	„	91.
Shápúr	„	91, 92, 94.
Istákhr (Persepolis),	„	91.
Sedjestán,	„	92.
Dárábjerd,	„	92, 97.
Chey or Dschey,	„	92, 94.
Merv,	„	93.
Kermán,	„	95.
Kúfa	„	101.
Máhí,	„	–?6.

These coins are now in the British Museum. It is interesting to ob-

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From the sharpness of the impression on these coins, I conclude that the hoard was buried soon after the latest date. But, besides the value attached to them from yielding several new types, they are extremely interesting in another point of view—they afford a criterion by which to determine the date of the destruction of the Susian palaces in an approximate manner. The accumulation of soil between them and the pavement, leads to the conclusion that they were hidden long after that event. This fact, coupled with the discovery of several Arsacidan and Sassanian urns around the bases of the fallen columns, leads to the probability that this barbarous act of demolition was due either to Alexander the Great himself, or to his successors in the Greek occupation of Susiana. Although no such exploit at this place is recorded of the great conqueror by his historians, they do not fail to tell us of his wantonly setting fire to the palace at Persepolis; it would, therefore, be no great stretch of the imagination to suppose that he acted similarly at Susa.*

In evidence of Greek influence at Susa, I may refer to the discoveries made at the extreme south corner of the great platform, which is, as previously mentioned, separated from the palace mound by an apparent roadway, and from the great citadel by a deep ditch or ravine. At this point,† which projects considerably beyond the rest of the mound, there once stood another columnar edifice in a similar style of ornamentation to that already described. It had, however, been entirely destroyed, and

serve, in running the eye down the line of names, that, with exception of the last two, they correspond with the order of Mohammedan conquest.

* It is worthy of remark, that the columns of Persepolis are free from all traces of fire. The whitened aspect which many of them exhibit, is not the effect of fire, but of the atmosphere. It is very probable that the proceedings supposed to have occurred at Persepolis, really took place at Susa, and that the destruction visible at the latter site is attributable to the "conqueror of the world."

† At L on the Plan.

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its fragments were used for the pavement of other edifices by the after-races who secured possession of the site. Among these were fluted shafts, bases of small columns, panels and cornices of marble adorned with the favourite rosette. The later edifice was equally destroyed, only eight feet of earth remaining above the rudely constructed pavement. Here and there were dug up column bases, miniature copies of the large bell-shaped monoliths in the great palace, elegantly, but, of course, not so highly sculptured. Immediately below the torus, around the swell of the bell, upon one of these* ran the trilingual inscription :—

"I am Artaxerxes, the Great King, the King of Kings, of King Darius the Son."

This, doubtless, refers to Artaxerxes Mnemon, who would thus appear to have been a great builder and renovator of palaces at Susa.

It is difficult to arrive at any definite conclusion concerning the date at which this edifice was destroyed, although one naturally associates its downfall with that of the larger palace. The interesting record, to which allusion will now be made, serves only to add to the difficulty.

About 240 feet south-westward † of the above column, a slight conical elevation, close to the edge of the mound, induced me to open a trench into it. After passing through some comparatively modern Arab graves, the workmen, at the depth of ten feet, discovered the base of another small column, perfectly different in character from the others. Its measurements were as follow :— Pedestal, seven inches high, and three feet nine inches square ; plinth, of the same height, and two feet nine

* The following are the measurements of this monolith :—plinth, 2 inches ; bell, 1 foot 3 inches ; torus, 4½ inches ; cincture, 1¼ inch ; total height, 1 foot 10¾ inches ; circumference of plinth, 8 feet.

† At M on the Plan.

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inches square; and torus, five inches high, by two feet five inches in circumference. On the north side was the

Base of column with Greek inscription.

following Greek inscription, cut in letters two-thirds of an inch in length upon the pedestal :—

ΠΥΘΑΓΟΡΑΣ ΑΡΙΣΤΑΡΧΟΥ
ΣΩΜΑΤΟΦΥΛΑΞ ΑΡΡΕΝΕΙΔΗΝ
ΑΡΡΕΝΕΙΔΟΥ ΤΟΝ ΣΤΡΑΤΗΓΟΝ
ΤΗΣ ΕΟΥΣΙΑΝΗΣ ΤΟΝ ΕΑΥΤΟΥ ΦΙΛΟΝ

which may be rendered :—

"Pythagoras, the son of Aristarchus, captain of the body-guard (in honour of) his friend Arreneides, son of Arreneides, Governor of Susiana."

The most curious feature connected with this epitaph is, that it stands upside down at the left corner, each line extending to within two inches of a fracture which divides the pedestal into two equal parts: hence, it would appear that each line was framed to occupy the space where it was inscribed. The column must have stood in its present situation when the epitaph was cut, because the position of the letters at the left corner of the stone was such that they could only have been conveniently effected by the sculptor kneeling on his *right* knee. Moreover, the aspect of the block, and the polished

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state of its broken edges, bear evidence of great antiquity, compared with the sharp and unworn appearance of the Greek letters. Standing, as it doubtless did, protected from the inclemency of the atmosphere on the inside of a colonnade, its position was well chosen. That such was its site, we have the evidence of another column base of coarse yellow limestone, fifteen feet further north, which had inscribed upon it, likewise inverted, and on the north side, the following unfinished but rudely-cut Greek inscription :—

ΤΩΝΕΝΤΟΙΣΠΡ

Southward of the first base were two others, both bell-shaped, one being perfectly plain, the other ornamented similarly to that bearing the Artaxerxes inscription.

It was at once evident, from the dissimilar styles of these columns, that they were removed from other edifices. They were, moreover, built upon fragments of another palace which once stood upon the same site.

The first inference derived from these inscriptions, and the knowledge of Susa having been in the possession of the Greeks, is that they were, as I have just said, the cause of all this havoc among the Persian palaces. We have certainly no positive evidence to establish the fact, but it is highly probable that both Arreneides, and his faithful friend Pythagoras, were generals of Alexander the Great.

Opposed to this view, however, are several specimens extant of a Persian coin known as the "Daric," which exhibits on the obverse a peculiarly Persian representation of a crowned king, in flowing drapery, kneeling on one knee, holding a bent bow in his left hand, and a long spear in his right, and around him the name *ΠΥΘΑΓΟΡΗ*. The reverse of this coin is perfectly unintelligible. Mr Vaux suggests that this name refers to the

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Pythagoras of the Susa column, whom he supposes to have lived during the sway of the Achæmenian kings. "As a commander of Persian troops, he would naturally make use of the usual Persian coin, the daric; and as leader of Greek troops under Persian rule, he would probably be allowed to place his name upon the Persian coins which were struck chiefly for his own troops."* It appears, however, extremely improbable to me that any Persian monarch would permit "the captain of his body-guard" to assume such a privilege.

The only other supposition which I can offer is, that Arreneides was governor of Susiana under some of the Seleucid successors of Alexander, and that Pythagoras, succeeding him, had a die struck by a Persian artist in which his rank, as local prince, was indicated by the bended knee, and simple name without the usual affix, "King" or "Great King."

But whoever the Pythagoras of the column base may have been, the inscription with the name of Susiana upon it is quite sufficient to decide the question as to the identity of Shúsh with the Susa of the Greeks.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the above discoveries were found† a few copper coins, of Sub-Parthian type, and small fragments of alabaster statuettes, apparently of Greek design. Other trenches in the great platform yielded a small collection of glass articles, clay vases, and rude coffins of Parthian or Sassanian origin. Among the latter were several cylindrical jars, three or four feet in length, containing the bodies of children; but as the cranium was generally larger than the neck of the vase, it is difficult to conceive how it could have been placed inside. The most feasible explanation is, that the jar was moulded round the skeleton, and then baked with

* "Numismatic Chronicle," vol. xviii., page 148, and figure 10.
† At N on Plan.

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the body inside,—numerous small holes being apparently made for the escape of the gases generated during the process!

About ten days after the commencement of the excavations, I was surprised at receiving a visit from the venerable mútávelí or guardian of Daniel's tomb, who voluntarily came to pay his respects. This condescension took me completely by surprise, because his sacred character, and my own infidelity, appeared to be insuperable bars to our good fellowship; it was, moreover, the first time I had been honoured with a friendly visit from a native. He was a handsome old man, with sharp twinkling eyes and pleasing expression of countenance; but he wore the green turban, that badge of fanaticism and my express aversion. Having certain plans in view, I was, however, really pleased to see the old gentleman, and therefore plied him with strong Arab coffee and pipes without number. This treatment evidently warmed the inmost recesses of his heart, for he suddenly exclaimed, in the midst of our conversation: "You are spending a great sum of money to no purpose, Sáhib, digging in this mound, where you will turn up nothing but stumps of columns and broken bricks. Come with me and I will shew you where to find maktúb (inscriptions)!" This was too good an offer to be declined. Nearly all his life had been spent upon the ruins, consequently he knew more about them than any one living. Conceiving, therefore, that a few coins, bestowed upon him in bákhshísh, would be infinitely better invested than in expending my funds at random, I promised that if he could shew me where to find a series of sculptures and inscriptions, the palm of his hand should be well anointed in return for his information.

Taking me to the summit of the Great Mound, he pointed out a spot at the north angle where he assured

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me was a large stone or stones bearing written characters, and but slightly covered with earth. As he spoke confidently on the subject, and as the record of King Susra* on the southern slope of the mound positively attests the existence of sculptured slabs, I saw no reason to doubt my informant's honesty of purpose. A trench was therefore immediately opened at the point indicated.†

We then adjourned to the head of Colonel Williams' trench‡ over King Susra's inscription. Here my guide told me that, when he was quite a boy, this and another slab stood at the edge of the mound, with their tops about three feet above the level of the surface. Out of curiosity he dug away the earth, and found them standing alone, erect like door-posts. The block, now lying at the foot of the mound, was then in the same broken condition. He stated that the natives have a tradition, that a great stone palace once existed at the south side of the mound, and strongly recommended me to continue the excavations then proceeding at that part. He also shewed me a place, half-way up the north roadway, where he once discovered a number of variously-sized copper figures, which, not knowing their value, he sold for a few keráns, to be melted down in the bazaar! In this manner disappear many valuable and interesting antiquities.

To a certain extent, the information of my newly-acquired friend proved correct. Early on the following morning, I was called to the trench§ at the top of the roadway. A wall of ancient bricks had been reached, many of which bore, on their edges, long and complicated inscriptions of five or six lines. They resembled one built into the doorway of Daniel's tomb, and fragments of others which were now and then dug up in the trenches at different parts of the ruins. These were, however, the

* Already mentioned at page 344.
† At D on the Plan.
‡ At A on the Plan.
§ At D on the Plan.

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only perfect specimens hitherto discovered, and the only undoubted relics of an age preceding that of the Achæmenian kings, to whom were referable all the remains hitherto exhumed. In digging away the earth towards a point where I conceived there must have been a gateway or grand entrance, there was found a broken slab of blue limestone, with a much-defaced and weathered inscription, written in a language which M. Oppert* terms "late Susanian." It differed considerably in character from that upon the earlier bricks. Lying near it was a fragment of a stone gate-post; a broken, rude sculpture of a bird's neck; and a piece of polished basalt, which apparently belonged to a statue, and shewed traces of cuneiform.

All these fragmentary relics lay as if thrown down with violence from a greater elevation on the north. Close at hand, too, was a broken mortar-shaped vessel, perhaps a fire-altar, containing a quantity of burnt bitumen, with the impressions of a sheep's teeth and jaw.

From the point where the débris occurred, the foundation wall, above mentioned, extended westward across the mound, containing in its lowest layers several inscribed bricks; but it was evident from their inscribed surfaces being built inwards, and from the use of coarse lime mortar, that they were derived from some more ancient structure. At the distance of a few feet to the north of this wall stood a well-built circular column or pillar of bricks, measuring three feet in diameter upon a broad base. On a level with the latter, parallel with the upper wall, was an undoubtedly more ancient foundation, to the base of which my trench was carried. Upon its surface, seventeen feet removed from the pillar, was a piece of red-sandstone slab, with a beautifully

* The learned *savant* engaged under the auspices of the French Government in the interpretation of the cuneiform records.

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cut and complicated old Scythic record. It lay flat upon another of polished limestone, both of them exhibiting undoubted marks of fire, as did likewise the débris around them.

Lying upon or near the slabs were several small articles;—a small ivory *crux ansata* two inches in length; a bundle of iron spear-heads adhering together with rust; two or three flat copper ornaments resembling those seen in Assyrian sculptures upon horses' trappings; a rude cubic die; and a mushroom-formed clay object, the top perforated, and the shaft covered with complex Babylonian characters.

But decidedly the most interesting objects obtained at this locality were a collection of broken alabaster vases, some of which must have been of large dimensions. A pile of these, sufficient to have filled a wheelbarrow, were gathered together, and I spent several hours in examining them separately. From among them, I selected four bearing trilingual inscriptions, which are now in the British Museum. The largest of these fragments, six and a half inches in height, is the mouth and upper part of a vase. The alabaster has split nearly in a straight line, following the grain from top to bottom, and divided the inscriptions. The commencement and most important portions of these, however, remain—the whole of the royal name, "Xerxes," excepting only the terminal letter in each version. A second fragment exhibits the last letters of the same name, with the commencement of the word "king;" and on a third is the word "great." There can be little doubt, therefore, that the complete inscription ran as usual :—

"Xerxes, the great king."

Beneath the inscriptions on the largest fragment is a vertical line close to the edge of the fracture, which I

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believe to have formed part of the border around an Egyptian cartouch of the same king. My reason for so thinking is, that a similar combination of cuneatic and hieroglyphic legends occurs upon the celebrated porphyry vase ascribed to Artaxerxes Ochus at Venice; and, moreover, because among the other fragments found was a cartouch bearing the name of Xerxes.

I am favoured by Mr Birch, of the British Museum, with the following highly interesting remarks on these and other alabaster vases of the same period :—

"The discoveries of Mr Loftus at Susa, like those of Mr Layard at Nimrúd, have brought to light some Egyptian fragments, of considerable interest for the history of the Persian dominion in Egypt. He has discovered fragments of those alabaster vases which, like that of Paris and its companion in the treasury of St Marc at Venice, once ornamented the palace of the Persian monarch. These vases are all of arragonite, or the so-called Oriental alabaster, which, fashioned into vessels of elegant shape, was in use for unguents, cosmetics, and other precious substances, as early as the fourth dynasty, and continued so till the age of the Persian rulers. But there is one remarkable distinction as to the quality of the material. The vases of the early epoch are made of fine semi-transparent alabaster, of uniform grain and colour, while those of the later period are of the kind called zoned, showing the successive accretions of the stalagmite of which they were composed. The quarry of this kind of alabaster seems to have been opened during the twenty-sixth dynasty, about 750 B.C., and the age of vases and other vessels made of it can consequently be determined. It comes from Tel-el-'Amarna, and is the alabaster now in use. The columns sent by Mehemet 'Alí to Pope Pius IX., and erected in the church of St Paolo Fuore le Mura at Rome, are from this later quarry. This

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alabaster is probably the kind called by Theophrastus (De Lapid., c. xii.) *chernites*, and by subsequent writers *chermites;* Pliny (N. H., xxxvii. 11, 71-73) described it as resembling ivory. It was in a sarcophagus of this material that Darius was buried.

"The name in hieroglyphics upon the vase reads Khashairsha, and is the same as that upon the vase at Paris. It refers to Xerxes I., and shews that the vase in question had been made in Egypt, and transported thence to Persia, where it had received the additional Persian, Median, and Babylonian inscriptions, in the same manner as the bronze lion-shaped weights at Nimrúd had Phœnician and Assyrian inscriptions.

"The records of the Persian rule are so scarce in Egypt, that a short note of the most remarkable monuments may not be unacceptable. The principal one is undoubtedly that of the officer Utaharsun,* whose statue is in the Vatican, and which mentions the conquest of the country by Cambyses, and its subsequent subjection to Darius. But the most numerous memorials of this period are those of the Cosseyr Road, where a series of proscynemata have been engraved to the local divinity Khem, lord of Kabti or Coptos, by two Persian and one Egyptian officer. The first of these is one of Atauhi, or Adeues, a *saris* of Persia, who inscribes the sixth year of Cambyses the thirty-sixth of Darius and the twelfth of Xerxes, in which last year he had† made the inscription. As these two first reigns correspond with the length assigned to them in Manetho, it has been generally supposed that they were inscribed to record that fact, rather than the circumstance of Atauhi having paid 'his vows in the face of the God Khem' in these years. In subsequent in-

* M. De Rougé, statue naophore du Vatican, Rev. Arch., viii., p. 37.

† Burton, Exc. Hier., Pl. viii. 1; Rosellini, Mon. Stor. Pte. i., tom. ii., p. 163, and foll.; Lepsius, Denkm. iii. Bl. 283.

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scriptions he calls himself the son of Artames, and of a female named Kantau or Candys. Previous, however, to this year of Darius, an Egyptian officer, who bears the same name, Aahmes, Amosis, as the last unhappy monarch of the twenty-sixth dynasty, an officer of troops, superintendent of constructions, and having the charge of the royal works of the whole country, son of Rakhnumhat, a similar functionary, and of Tsaennefertum, daughter of one Psaumetik, or Psammetichus, had made excavations from the sixteenth to the twentieth year of the same monarch.* A wrong interpretation of these inscriptions had led to much confusion, for it was supposed that Darius had retained the family of the wretched Amosis in the government, in the condition of dependent *meleks*, which the text does not justify. The Amosis of the Cosseyr Road is undoubtedly of the family of the Saite dynasty. The principal inscriptions, however, of Atauhi are of the thirty-sixth year of Darius, whom he calls† 'the beloved of the god Khem dwelling in Coptos.' In one which bears the date of this same year, he gives also the thirteenth of *Khishairsha*, or Xerxes, whom he calls the son of Darius, mentioning both monarchs as if living. At this period Atauhi held the rank of *Repa*, or lord-lieutenant of Coptos.‡ Now it is remarkable that in other proscynemata he mentions Xerxes alone, as on the remarkable inscription of the nineteenth of Thoth, in the second year of Xerxes,§ which probably marks the reduction of Egypt again to the Persian rule after its revolt (Herodotus, vii. 7) in 484 B.C.‖ The other proscynemata

* Lepsius, Denkm., Ab. iii., Bl. 283, p. Cf. Burton, Exc. Hier., Pl. iii. iv.
† Lepsius, Denkm., iii. 283, p. ‡ Lepsius, Denkm., iii. 283, n.
§ Lepsius, Denkm., iii. 283, n.
‖ In the lists of Manetho, both as given by Africanus, Eusebius, Syncellus, and the Armenian version, the reign of Darius is placed at twenty-one years. Cf. Bunsen's Egypt's Place, vol. i. appendix, p. 642, 643. After much oscillation of opinion, B.C. 525 is the admitted date of the conquest of Egypt.

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of this officer, dated in the sixth and tenth and twelfth years of Xerxes, are less important, as Egypt* remained in the Persian power almost till the conquest of Alexander. But the works in this road continued only to be carried on in the fifth and sixteenth years of Artaxerxes by Arur-resh,† another Persian *saris*.

"With the exception of the temple at El-Khargeh, there are no other remains of the Persians in Egypt, the country having been administered as a great satrapy under its local governments, and retaining its privileges. The inscription on the cartouch found by Mr Loftus reads *Khashairsha* or *Khshairsha*, as on the vase in the Bibliotheque Imperiale at Paris, and not *Khishairsha* like the name upon the Cosseyr Road; but this minute difference does not necessarily prove that a later *Xerxes* is intended. Unfortunately, there is not enough remaining to decide whether the inscription which is found after the name of Xerxes and Artaxerxes on these vases at Paris and Venice, occurred also on these vases. This inscription, which means the 'great house —the great,' is an interpretation into hieroglyphics of the title 'great king' of the Persian inscription — the first expression, 'the great house,' meaning commander of the whole world, according to the interpretation of Horapollo." ‡

The old mútávelí was perfectly astonished when told how much I valued such fragments. "Amán! Amán!— What a pity!" he exclaimed. "Only to think what an ass

* Lepsius, Denkm., 283, k. l.

† Ibid., Bl. 283, o.

‡ I. 61. For these inscriptions on the Paris vase, see Rosellini, M. St., Pte. i., tom. ii., p. 176. Champollion, Précis, Pl. No. 125-125 a. Caylus, Recueil, v. Pl. xxx. Lenormant, Musée des Antiq. Egypt., fo. Paris, 1841, p. 37. Pauthier, Essai sur l'Origine des Écritures Chinoise et Égyptienne, 8vo, Paris, 1840, p. 111. Journal Asiatique, Fev., 1823. Mémoires de l'Acad., xii. 143. For the Artaxerxes vase, see Mr Pettigrew in the Archæologia, vol. xxx., Pl. vi., p. 275.

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I was! A few years ago, after a heavy rain, I found a large cup like that, but three times its size. It was quite perfect, and covered with writing; but, not aware of its value—'Alí forgive me!—I broke it up, and made it into chibúk bowls and mouthpieces. They lasted me a long time. And I might perhaps have sold them for a tomán! Amán! We grow wiser as we grow older!" Although I deeply regretted the loss of such a treasure, it was infinitely amusing to hear him repeatedly bewailing the opportunity he let slip of turning his discovery to better account.

The excavations upon the Great Mound fully convinced me that if any primitive buildings still remain perfect at Susa, they are to be disentombed at this portion of the ruins. With the exception, however, of the inscription of Susra, several bricks in excellent preservation, and the fragmentary records* above mentioned, there was nothing further found in the trenches, and my funds failed before I could satisfactorily explore the depths of the ruin. Notwithstanding the assertion of my friend the sacristan, there was no appearance of the stone searched for. According to his best recollection, it had stood close to a deep ravine, and there seems every probability that during the winters' rains it had fallen from its position, and been covered up near the base of the mound. He had not seen it for many years. Still, the bricks and inscription, which I was so fortunate as to uncover, were undoubted proofs of the remote antiquity ascribable to the great Susian citadel.

We have additional confirmation on this subject in the

* The results of my trenches in the great citadel have only recently arrived in England, but as the language in which these complicated old Scythic monuments is written, is still a mystery even to the initiated in cuneiform decipherment, we must, I fear, wait long until its difficulties may be unravelled. There is every probability that some of the brick inscriptions extend as far back as the period of the patriarch Abraham.

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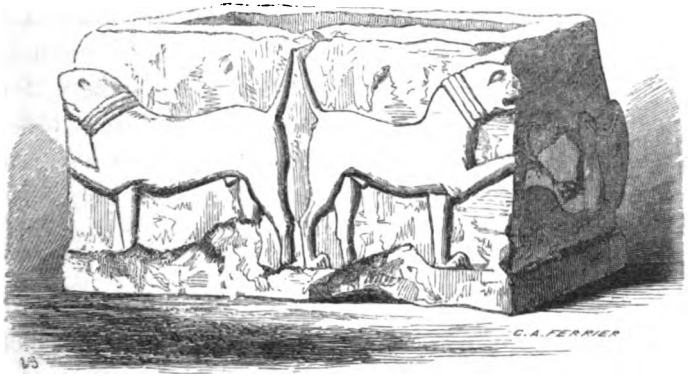
very archaic sculptures upon a trough of yellow limestone, lying in the channel of the Sháour at the foot of Daniel's



Sculptured Trough at Daniel's Tomb.

tomb. Around the sides are two animals—doubtful whether dogs or lions—apparently about to devour two prisoners with their arms tied. As Sir R. Ker Porter gives an exceedingly rough and incorrect sketch of these animals, the annexed woodcut from Mr Churchill's careful drawing is here inserted. Whether or not the scene herein represented is intended to commemorate the events which befell the prophet, I leave to the consideration of my readers.

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CHAPTER XXXI.

The "Black Stone"—Its Discovery and Adventures—Its Connexion with the Welfare of Khúzistán—The Plot for its Removal Defeated—Investigations among the Rivers of Susa—Identification of the "Ulaï," or Eulæus—Bifurcation of Modern Rivers—Sheikh Abdulla Forgiven—Friendly Parting between the Arabs and the Frank.

It was upon the surface of the Great Mound that my now indefatigable cicerone of the ruins discovered the celebrated "black stone," the safe custody of which is supposed to exercise such wonderful influence on the welfare of the province. As certain details connected with its history are not generally known, it may be interesting to narrate them *in extenso*.

When the present guardian of the holy shrine was a very little boy, he used to accompany his father, who preceded him in the same capacity, from Dizfúl to Shúsh. His partiality to antiquarian pursuits soon manifested itself, and he made a practice of seeking in every hole and corner of the ruins for "picture-stones," and, of course, precious metals. Engaged one day in his usual pursuit, he accidentally stumbled over the stone projecting through the soil at the top of the roadway, where my large excavation was made. The summit of his ambition at that time was, boylike, to move and roll it down the steep slope of the mound, that he might see it crashing its way through the thick undergrowth of brushwood. Year after year, however, elapsed before his

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strength was sufficient to accomplish this great exploit. Down it went at last, however, to the intense delight of the young Hercules. From its high estate, occupying as it had done, for so many centuries, the threshold of the temple, or of the king's own palace, overlooking the country around from its elevated position, it was suddenly debased to the ignominious office of a washing block by the edge of the Sháour at the foot of Daniel's tomb. Here it was seen in 1809 by Captain Monteith and his companion Captain Macdonald Kinnear, who could then have purchased it on moderate terms. Circumstances however—not caused by any popular opposition—rendered its removal inconvenient at that time, however desirous these gentlemen were of possessing it. According to the old man's story, two other Firenghís came shortly afterwards and offered him one thousand four hundred keráns (nearly seventy pounds!) for this curious piece of sculpture. He hesitated ; whereon they said :—" Well ! consider the proposal, and when we return we will pay you the money and carry it away !" But, alas ! they never returned ! Poor Grant and Fotheringham were murdered near the foot of the great mountains at the instigation of the ruthless Kelb 'Alí Khán, the Wálí of Lúristán, under whose protection they travelled ! These offers on the part of the Firenghís were soon magnified, and spread like wildfire among the superstitious Arabs, who now began to set great value upon it—thinking, doubtless, that if a Frank conceived it worth his while to carry it away, it must be valuable indeed.

It is then related that " when Sir Robert Gordon visited Susa in 1811, he found the stone more highly estimated ; and in 1812 its reputation was so established throughout the country as a talisman, powerful against the plague, hostile invasion, and other evils, that a person, sent by him expressly to purchase it, and authorized for that

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purpose by Mohammed 'Alí Mírza, Prince of Kirmánsháh, although he had placed it in a boat on the river Sháour, was compelled to relinquish his prize by the inhabitants of Shúster, Dizfúl, and other places adjacent to Susa." *

From that time its security was considered a matter of such vital importance to the province, that the Arabs "collected among themselves two thousand tománs, which they presented with two fine horses to the Prince, and it was decreed by his Royal Highness that the stone should not be removed from Susa." But jealousy of external influence could not protect it from native cupidity. A blind Bení Lám Seyid came with two attendants to say his prayers to Daniel. During six months they hovered about the tomb, waiting an opportunity, and at length blew up the stone with gunpowder, in the vain hope of enriching themselves with the treasure which it was supposed to contain. It became, of course, gradually reported that the perpetrator of this outrage was a Firenghí emissary in disguise. Under all circumstances, therefore, it is not surprising that the European visitor should be regarded with great suspicion and abhorrence; the more so when it is considered that immediately after the above occurrence, a series of misfortunes befell the province—"the plains were depopulated by the plague, the bridge of Shúster suddenly broke, and the famous dam at Háwíza was carried away; all which disasters were, of course, ascribed to the destruction of the talisman."† Hence it was that such a feeling of hostility and suspicion attended all visits of Europeans to Susa.

In order to preserve the fragments intact, they were collected together and secretly built into a pillar in the veranda of the tomb. This wonderful relic is described

* "Sir William Ouseley's Travels in Various Countries," vol. i., p. 420.
† "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. ix., p. 69.

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to have been twenty-two inches long and twelve inches broad. Sheikh Mohammed voluntarily gave me an account of it, and his description perfectly agrees with the sketch made by Captain Monteith. He said that on one side were figures of the sun, moon, stars, birds, and

The "Black Stone."*

other objects, which he understood were representations of the gods (or rather sacred emblems) whom the people

* The above woodcut is a copy of that published from General Monteith's sketch in Walpole's "Travels in Turkey, vol. ii., p. 426.

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of Shúsh formerly worshipped; and that on another side was writing, while the remaining two faces of the block were defaced. The above was, I believe, the import of the black stone; but, as the cuneiform record had not been carefully copied, it was desirable that I should obtain a cast from it, if it were found impracticable to obtain possession of the original.

As any direct suspicion of my object would have compromised the prosecution of the general excavations, and placed me in considerable personal jeopardy, I took care never to visit the tomb, or to make any inquiry concerning the highly valued talisman. At length, however, when my excavation funds were nearly exhausted, it became necessary to take some steps in the matter.

The old keeper of the tomb was my frequent visitor, but hitherto I had avoided all allusion to the black stone, and he had been equally reserved on the subject. One day as he sat enjoying bitter coffee in my tent, I abruptly opened negotiations by asking him to afford me the opportunity of examining it; but he opened his eyes in well-feigned astonishment, and denied all knowledge of its whereabouts. To his unaffected surprise, however, I precisely indicated the pillar where it lay concealed, by means of information elicited from other quarters. Finding it useless to attempt farther deception on this point, he acknowledged its existence, but resorted to various subterfuges to drive me from my purpose:—"Well! but there is nothing upon it; it is a plain black stone." I merely replied,—"There are figures on one side and writing on the other."—"Firenghís are wonderful people! You come here, and, without having ever seen this stone, not only describe it correctly, but point out the exact spot where I buried it years ago! By the beard of Danyel, you know everything! You come, and you dig up palaces which our fathers never saw, and read a language on its

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great blocks of marble which must have been written by the Gins! Surely! it is useless to tell you lies, because you know the truth! But, as to this said 'Sang-í-Ghyáwr (Infidel's stone!): you will be able to make nothing of it, because it is broken into pieces, most of which are larger than my hand, and many are much smaller." I suggested that the various pieces might be fitted together, and if not, that all I required was, to make paper casts of them, as he had seen me do with the Artaxerxes inscription. Then came the objection,—"If we take down the pillar, the tomb will fall,—and what, then, will become of me its guardian?" He quite forgot, however, that the same difficulty presented itself when he built the pieces into the pillar years ago. I proposed that due precautions should be taken for the safety of the tomb, by propping it up during the short time required to complete my examination of the relic. His concluding argument was by far the most potent, and here my chief difficulty lay:—"But pilgrims or workmen are always here now. Every person in Dizfúl is talking about the big idols (the bulls of the colonnade), and in a few days all the town will be here to see them. How is it possible to do what you ask?" I determined that the departure of the workmen should be hastened, and suggested that the extrication, copying, and reburial of the stone might be readily effected some night when no person was in the neighbourhood. Here the subject for the present dropped, and the old man was left to ponder over the conversation. On his rising to depart, I dropped a few coins into his willing hand, with the remark that they were a portion of the reward intended to be bestowed for the trouble he had experienced from so many workmen residing in the tomb. His hand clutched instantly on the glittering coin, and his look told me that he fully understood their real meaning.

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For nearly a week the old man kept himself aloof from my camp, lest reports might arise injurious to his reputation as a good Mussulman. At length, however, he intimated his willingness to enter into my plans, provided a favourable opportunity should occur for that purpose. The workmen were duly paid off, and there appeared every prospect of our effecting the dark mysterious deed. All details were arranged, the props ready, and the hour fixed upon, when, to my utter vexation, a shoal of pilgrims arrived from Dizfúl, and seized possession of the sanctuary which my workmen had but just deserted. Operations were consequently deferred,—but next day the numbers of the devout increased—and the next—and the next—till it became evident that the annual pilgrimage to the shrine had commenced long before the usual period. The wonderful reports spread abroad concerning the excavations had raised public expectation to such a pitch that it could be no longer restrained; men, women, and children, bringing their tents and property, and evidently contemplating a lengthened stay, flocked to the banks of the Sháour.

The scene was a busy one, as they gathered in groups among the columns, and discussed the questions how and whence those huge blocks were conveyed to their present position. Children played along the edges of the trenches, their rich dresses contrasting brilliantly with the now dying and brown vegetation of the mounds. However interesting such a scene might be at any other time, it was anything but agreeable at that moment. I lingered for several days upon the spot, but, the number of Daniel's visitors increasing instead of diminishing, I was at length reluctantly obliged to abandon my project. For some time I was inclined to suspect that the old man had played me false, and that he had himself arranged the inopportune arrival of the pilgrims; but it was afterwards

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reported to me that he had been compelled to seek his own safety by a hasty flight in consequence of his suspected arrangements with myself. What became of him afterwards I never learned.

The excavations having satisfactorily settled the much-debated question as to the identity of Shúsh with the Susa of the Greeks, my next efforts were directed towards solving the problem with reference to the determination of the Susian rivers.

The ancient geographers make distinct mention of four great streams—the Choaspes, Eulæus, Koprates, and Pasitigris, of which the Eulæus and Pasitigris were infinitely the most important. At the present day there are four rivers flowing through the province of Khúzistán—namely, the Kerkhah, Sháour, the Dizfúl river, and the Kárún. Modern writers * all concur in identifying the Choaspes with the Kerkhah,—the Koprates with the Dizfúl river,—and the Pasitigris with the lower part of the Kárún. Some even go so far as to regard the Sháour as the ancient Eulæus; but, as it is only a narrow stream, at certain seasons expended in cultivation before it forms a junction with the Dizfúl river, it appears, on this evidence alone, highly improbable that the Sháour can represent the navigable river by which Alexander sailed from Susa to the sea; † or that which Ptolemy mentions, after the Mosæus, as the chief river of Susiana. Not concurring in this determination, I sought upon the spot itself for a more satisfactory solution of the question, and was more fortunate in this research than for the black stone in the tomb of Daniel.

The difficulty hitherto attending the subject arose, not so much from the *apparently* confused accounts of the

* Consult the "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. iii., p. 258; ix., p. 85; xii., p. 105; and xvi., p. 91.

† Arriani Expeditio Alexandri, lib. vii., c. 7.

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ancients, as from our own imperfect knowledge of the countries they described. Moreover, during the twenty centuries since those histories were written, many and vast changes have occurred in the courses of the rivers themselves, flowing, as they do, through soft alluvial soil.

My first inquiries were directed to Sheikh Mohammed, whose age and constant migrations over the adjoining plains, seemed most likely to afford the required information. I was not long in ascertaining that his authority was valuable. He told me that, many years ago, a bifurcation of the Kerkhah took place near Pái Púl, soon after issuing from the mountains; that the eastern branch of the river flowed about two miles eastward of the great mound at Shúsh; and that after absorbing the Sháour at a point below a ford, now called Umm-et-timmen, it flowed to its junction with the Kárún at Ahwáz.

A few days subsequent to this conversation, during a ride to Dizfúl, soon after passing the last of the undulating low mounds which extend in that direction, I noticed a considerable depression, and immediately pronounced it to be the eastern and extinct branch of the Kerkhah, to which Mohammed had alluded. Its width is not less than nine hundred feet, and its depth, drifted up with sand, varies from twelve to twenty feet. This depth of channel below the level of the plain completely established in my mind its importance as the bed of a once-navigable stream; while the numerous remains of irrigating canals with high embankments, which diverge from it on either side, proved it to have been a main artery. The Arabs of the locality call it the "Shat átík," or "ancient river." In corroboration of this fact, a small runner of water from the Kerkhah flows along the course of the old channel; and is exhausted in the cultivation of the lands on the eastern side of the ruins.

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It is the last water-course crossed on the road from Dizfúl to Susa.

I subsequently crossed this old channel at several different points, and observed that it everywhere retained the same character. Nothing would have afforded me greater pleasure than tracing its entire course, but other duties claimed my attention, and obliged me unwillingly to quit the plains of Susa.

The existence of this ancient channel being once established, and its identity with the historical Eulæus admitted, it is no difficult matter to reconcile all the apparent discrepances of the early geographers. We can fully understand how, in consequence of its connecting the Kerkhah and the Kárún, its name might be applied indiscriminately to either of them, and *vice versâ*, by persons not intimately acquainted with the minute features of the country.

Quintus Curtius * informs us that, in his march from Babylon, "Alexander came to the Choaspes, and then entered Susa." This is evidently the modern Kerkhah.

Strabo,† however, in describing the further progress of the conqueror from Susa to Persepolis, enumerates the rivers crossed in the following order:—"Next to the Choaspes is the Koprates, and the Pasitigris." Now, it is evident that, if he crossed the Choaspes in approaching Susa, he could not again cross it in quitting that capital for Persia, unless it be allowed that he crossed two branches of the same river.

Ptolemy‡ does not allude to the Choáspes, but places Susa upon the left branch of the Eulæus, upwards of a degree above the point of confluence with the right arm of the river. The latter part of his description is somewhat obscure, but his evidence is material towards establishing the fact of there being two branches of the

* Lib. ii. 9. † Casaub., page 729. ‡ Lib. vi., c. iii.

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Eulæus, which cannot possibly be other than the two streams of the Choaspes mentioned by Quintus Curtius and Strabo.

Pliny,* referring to Susa, says that "the Eulæus surrounded the citadel of the Susians," which might well be the case if a branch flowed on either side of it, and these were connected by means of canals or moats for defence.

The most interesting explanation, however, afforded by the identity of the Kerkhah and the old channel with the two streams of the Eulæus, is that of the remarkable passage in the Book of Daniel:† "And I saw in a vision; (and it came to pass, when I saw, that I was at Shushan in the palace, which is in the province of Elam;) and I saw in a vision, and I was by the river Ulai." "And I heard a man's voice *between the banks of Ulai.*" As this expression stands, it is perfectly incomprehensible; but, if we understand it to mean, *between the two streams of the Eulæus*, nothing can be more lucid or intelligible.

It is a remarkable fact, that the Sabæans divide the Kerkhah into three parts (one of which, as observed by Mr Layard,‡ is called "Akhrokh 'Alaïtha," "the Upper Kerkhah"); which division may refer to the trunk stream of the ancient Kerkhah, and to its bifurcating branches.

A difficult passage in Diodorus Siculus§ is likewise rendered clear by the discovery of the Eulæus' channel:— "Antigonus (advancing from Susa) having passed part of his troops over the river (Koprates), Eumenes suddenly crosses the Pasitigris, and attacks them. Antigonus retreats to Badace on the Eulæus, and with diffi-

* Lib. vi., c. 27. † Chap. viii., verses 2, 16.
‡ "Journal of the Royal Geographical Society," vol. xvi., p. 94.
§ Lib. xix., c. 17.

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culty makes his way through the country of the Cossæi to the inhabited part of Media." He did not retreat to Susa, because, by so doing, it would have been necessary to cross the eastern Eulæus twice in his march into Media. He therefore preferred halting on its eastern bank at Badace, by this means escaping the risk of surprise while entangled "between the banks of the Ulai."

There is no question among geographers concerning the identity of the Pasitigris and Eulæus, but it was never before explained how the two names were applied to the same river, as must have been the case from Arrian's passages: "Nearchus sails back past the outlet of the Tigris to the mouth of the Pasitigris, which he ascends till he comes to the bridge of boats by which Alexander was going to pass his army over to Susia."* The Pasitigris here is undoubtedly the Kárún.

"The navy of Alexander sails from the Persian Gulf up to Susia (by the Pasitigris or Kárún). Alexander, who was then *at Susa, embarks and sails down the Eulæus* (evidently the extinct channel which extended to the Pasitigris): he then sails from the mouth of the Eulæus (Pasitigris) along the Gulf coast to the mouth of the Tigris."† There can be no doubt that the modern Kárún was the ancient Pasitigris.‡ As Susa is distant forty miles from the nearest point of the Kárún, it is evident that the first mention of Eulæus in this passage does not refer to the Kárún, because Alexander embarked *at Susa*. It is equally apparent that the Eulæus, afterwards men-

* Arrian, "Indica," 42. † Arrian, "Exped. Alex.," vii. 7.

‡ Sir Henry Rawlinson remarks on this river, that it was named by the old Persians Dijláhí Kúdák, or the Little Tigris,—and this was translated into Arabic by Dijlah, Dújeïl. With this indication, then, he had no difficulty in recognising in the Greek πασι the old Persian word Pas, signifying "low," "inferior," and in thus translating Pasitigris, like the Arabic Dújeïl, "the inferior or little Dijlah." See "Journal of Royal Asiatic Society," vol. ix., p. 90. Other authors adopt the more simple derivation, Pasitigris, as if "Persi" Tigris.

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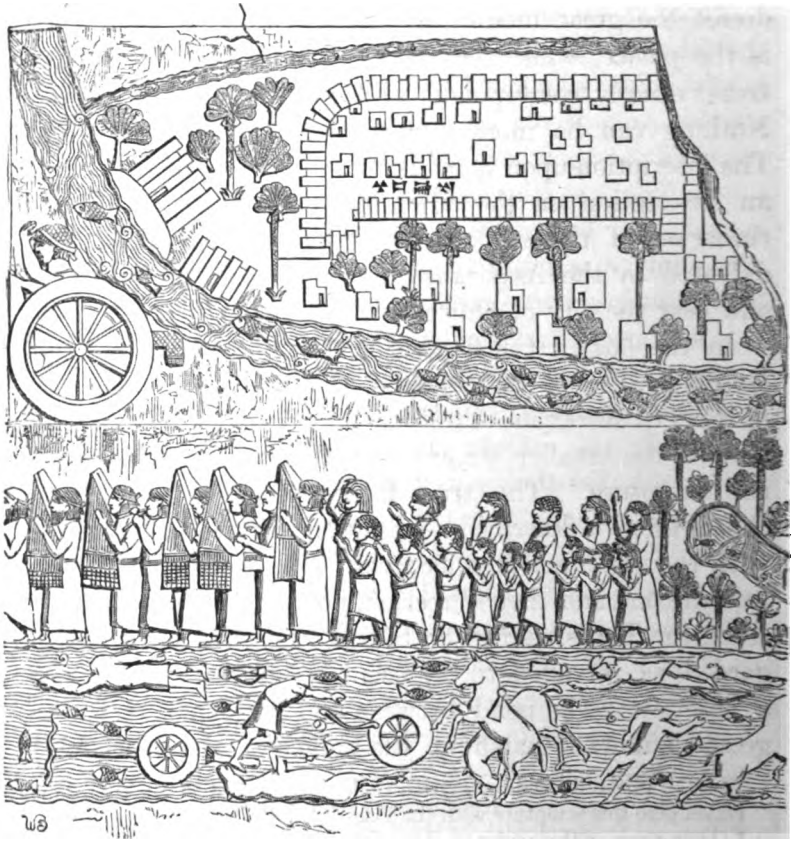
tioned, could be no other than the Kárún, the same which Nearchus ascended to Susia (the territory of Susa), and the same which Ptolemy* mentions, after the Mosæus, as the chief river of Susiana.

But a farther convincing proof that the Kerkhah bifurcated in ancient times, and that its eastern arm, connecting



View of Susa on a Sculpture from Nineveh.

it with the Kárún, was the Eulæus of Susa, is found in one of Mr Layard's sculptures from the palace of Senna-

* Lib. vi., c. 3.

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cherib at Koyunjuk (Nineveh).* We have on it a representation of Susa as it stood in the days of Ashur-bani-pal (to whom this monument is due), and it is the more interesting, because we are able to recognise upon it a faithful picture of the modern ruins seen from the southern side!

The large mound on the left of this sculpture is without doubt the great mound or citadel, the smaller mound is the palace, while the town, with its walls and date-trees, exactly corresponds with the low eastern ruins.† Nothing can be more correct than this identification. The inscription upon it reads "district of Madaktu;" and an inscription on the adjoining slab, which is a continuation of the subject, states that the Susians were defeated by the Assyrians near the district of Madaktu, and near the city of Shushan.

In the large river flowing from the mountains, and laving the foot of the citadel, I distinguish the Choaspes or modern Kerkhah—the Shâour being then absorbed by this or the smaller stream, and therefore not shewn on the sculpture. The true Eulæus—the extinct river-channel above described—is undoubtedly to be identified with the upper and smaller river. The angle made by the two streams, and their direction, flowing towards the large river, the Tigris, at the bottom of the slab, must be regarded as intended to represent a bifurcation, and not a junction. The pond between the larger rivers is the great Chaldæan marsh at the mouth of the Kerkhah.‡

* No. 50 in the Northern Assyrian Gallery at the British Museum.

† Compare this sculpture with the Plan of the Ruins.

‡ On first seeing this sculpture, I at once identified the city thereon shewn with Susa, without being aware that Mr Layard had already done so. I was also delighted to find the rivers represented as the present configuration of the country led me to expect they should be, and in every respect agreeing with the views advanced by me in a memoir "On the Identification of the River Eulæus," communicated to the Royal Geographical Society. Mr Layard's explanation of the rivers ("Nineveh and Babylon," p. 452) does

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It is unfortunate that the adjoining slab on the right is destroyed, because, I doubt not, we should have there seen the other rivers, and thus had a skeleton map of the ancient province of Susiana.

It may be objected that the theory above advanced, concerning the bifurcation of the Choaspes and Eulæus from the same stream, requires confirmation and further explanation. My belief is, that the Eulæus was an artificial channel for irrigation and defence, formed by throwing a bund, or dam, across the main river, and that this barrier ceased to exist either from neglect or wanton destruction.

The artificial bifurcation of rivers is by no means an unfrequent occurrence in that alluvial region; we need, therefore, have the less hesitation in adopting this mode of explanation. Instances have already been described in the two branches of the Euphrates above Babylon,* and of the Kárún at Shúster.† The remarkable breakage of a modern dam on the Kerkhah itself may not be an inappropriate subject here to describe.

Previously to 1832, the Kerkhah flowed past the large and important Arab town of Háwíza. In order to cultivate the country on the north-east of the place, a person, called Háshem, dug a canal about fifteen miles higher up the river. As in the case of the ancient Pallacopas of Alexander, the ground proved low, soft, and yielding, and soon required a dam to restrain the overflowing of the Kerkhah into the canal. During high rises of the river, this was frequently much damaged; at length one night the whole stream of the Kerkhah, breaking down the barrier, quitted its former channel, and left Háwíza entirely without water, except such as could be obtained by

not agree with mine, but he was not then aware of my having discovered the extinct channel.

* Page 44 of this work. † Page 299

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digging wells in the old bed. Several governors of Khúzistán have endeavoured to remedy this disaster, but so far, for many reasons, without success. A new canal was dug above and opposite to the Náhr Háshem, and was called the Mechríyya; it being intended to divert the course of the river from the channel of the Náhr Háshem into its original bed. Khánler Mírza spent, it was said, 7000 tománs* in building a bund or dam across the Kerkhah at the new cut when the river was at its lowest level; as soon as the great rise took place, the water flowed into the Mechríyya cutting, but, from some cause unexplained, rushed back again, utterly demolishing the bund and all the works on which the Prince had expended so large a sum.

There can be little doubt that the bifurcation of the Eulæus from the Kerkhah was effected by means of a similar bund, and that the desertion of its channel was caused by the breaking of this artificial barrier in a manner similar to the Náhr Háshem in modern times.

The points connected with the determination of the Eulæus are of great importance in enabling us to comprehend the comparative geography of the country in question, and it is satisfactory, by thus explaining away apparent discrepances, to rescue the veracity of the early historians from unmerited censure and disparagement.†

A day or two before quitting Susa, I received intimation that the Prince's secretary had received a large bribe, and was about intriguing to obtain pardon for Sheikh Abdullah from the Sháh-záda. Such being the case, I determined on being beforehand with the Vizír. Sending,

* Nearly £3500 sterling.

† Such of my readers as may desire to investigate this interesting subject more fully, will find the above details more minutely laid down in my paper "On the Determination of the River Eulæus of the Greek Historians," communicated to the Royal Geographical Society.

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therefore, for Sheikh Ghâfil, I gave him to understand that, being about to quit the country, it was my desire to do so without, if possible, leaving behind me any rancorous feeling towards Europeans; that I, therefore, entirely forgave Abdullah; and that, as a proof of my being in earnest, I should likewise use my influence with the Prince to obtain his forgiveness. I reminded him of the dislike which the Arabs had long entertained towards my countrymen, and that all the return we had received for the money spent in the district, and for our endeavours to establish amicable relations with them, was a determination to oppose our objects.

He acknowledged that we had always acted bountifully, and endeavoured to do good;—"But," said he, "the Arab is an Arab; he was born a donkey, and you cannot expect that he will die a horse!" At the same time he admitted that the opinions of his people had much changed regarding the Firenghís since our residence among them. "They have at least discovered that Firenghís have one and the same God as themselves; that they are just and honourable in their dealings—a fact which they could not say for Arab or Persian; you have not dug up the Imám's bones, but, on the contrary, it is observed that you have evinced the greatest desire not to injure a single stone, out of respect for the feelings of the Arabs!" Such was the opinion pronounced by the chief of the 'Alí Kethír on his intercourse with Europeans.

Although my residence at Susa had been accompanied with much opposition and annoyance, yet, on the whole, I had passed an agreeable three months upon its mounds, which had now become endeared to me like old friends, from whom I felt loath to part. At length, however, the day arrived when I was destined to take a final leave of a spot associated with many interesting recollections.

Before quitting the plains, I spent a day at the camp

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of Sheikh Mohammed, who had so frequently been my resource in case of need from the date of our first interview. At bidding him adieu, in return for his trouble and kind services, I placed on his shoulders a handsome abba, with which he was as content as though it had been a bag of tománs. I had likewise intended to visit Sheikh Ghafil, but his camp being out of the way, and the heat too great for comfort, I contented myself with sending him a dress of honour by the messenger he had deputed to guide me to his encampment. On receiving the dress for his chief, the messenger placed it upon his head, and went through such a series of contortions, inflexions, genuflexions, and manœuvres, that it appeared as if the honour were too weighty for him to bear, and that he was likely to sink under its astounding influence.

A great change had indeed taken place in the behaviour of the Arabs. The intercourse established between us had had the effect of uprooting many fixed prejudices, and, I trust, that future travellers will experience a more courteous and hospitable reception than that which greeted the Frontier Commission on three several occasions. The more I saw of the Arabs, the more convinced was I that, however wild or bigoted they may be, they possess at heart a disposition capable of love and respect towards the Firenghí.

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CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.*

FIRST CHALDÆAN EMPIRE.

B.C. about.	Names of Kings.	Cuneiform Records, where Discovered.	Dates of Corresponding Events in the Bible.
2234	Urukh.	Búwáríyya at Warka; Great Mound, Niffar; Do. Sinkara; Múgeyer.	
	Ilgi.	Niffar; Warka; Sinkara; Múgeyer.	B. C. Birth of Abraham, 2130
	Shinti-Shil-Khak.		
1950	Kudur-Mapula. (perhaps Chedorlaomer.)	Múgeyer.	
	Ismi-Dagan.	Múgeyer.	
1860	Ibil-Anu-Duma.	Múgeyer.	
	Gurguna.	Múgeyer.	
	Naramsin.		
1700	Purna-Puriyas.	Sinkara.	
	Durri-Galzu.	Akker-Kúf; Múgeyer.	The Exodus, 1625
	Khammu-rabi.	Red Mound at Sinkara; Múgeyer; Gherára near Bághdád; on Tablets from Tel Sifr.	
1600	Shamsu-Iluna	On Tablets from Tel Sifr.	
			Death of Moses, 1585
	Sin-shada.	Upper terrace of the Búwáríyya, and Wuswas gateway, at Warka.	First Servitude, 1558
1500	Rim-sin.	On Tablet from Múgeyer.	
	Zur-sin.	Abú-Shehreyn.	
	Merodach-Gina.	N. of the Búwáríyya at Warka.	
1400			
1300			

Between 1400 B.C. and 625 B.C., we know little of the Chaldæan Monarchy, but in B.C. 1110 a Chaldæan King named Merodach-adan-akhi defeated the Assyrians, and carried off their gods as trophies to Babylon. The lower plains of the Tigris and Euphrates seem to have been governed by independent kings, except at such times as the Assyrians were able to hold them in subjection. In the time of the Assyrian Queen Sammuramit (Semiramis), wife of Phulukh III., about 760 B.C., the Assyrian dominion over Chaldæa was for a short period established; and ultimately Sennacherib, in 702 B.C., defeated Merodach-Baladan, King of Babylon, and placed his own son Esarhaddon on the throne. In 625 B.C., Nineveh fell before the united armies of the Medes and Babylonians, from which time was established the

SECOND CHALDÆAN (OR BABYLONIAN) EMPIRE.

B.C. about.	Names of Kings.	Cuneiform Records, where Discovered.	Dates of Corresponding Events in the Bible.
625	Nabopollasar.	On Tablets from Warka.	
605	Nabo-kuduri-uzur. (Nebuchadnezzar.)	Babylon; Birs Nimrúd; Bághdád; Sinkara; Cylinders in Europe.	B.C. Jehoiachin, 599
562	Evil-Merodach.		Zedekiah, 588
560	Nergal-shar-ezur.	Babylon; Cylinder from Babylon, at Trin. Col., Cambridge.	
554	(Neriglissar)		
538	Nabonidus and	Múgeyer; Red Mound, Sinkara; on Tablets from Warka.	
538	Bel-shar-ezer. (Belshazzar.)		
	Taking of Babylon by Cyrus.		

* The list of Chaldæan Kings in this Table, is borrowed from Mr Vaux's "Nineveh and Persepolis" (4th edition.) To it are added the more recent discoveries, and a list of localities whence the Cuneiform Records of the various kings were derived.

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PERSIAN EMPIRE.

B.C. about.	Names of Kings.	Cuneiform Records, where Discovered.
538	Cyaxares.	
536	Cyrus.	Múrghâb; on Tablets from Warka.
525	Cambyses.	Sinkara.
522	Smerdis the Magian.	
521	Darius I. (Hystaspes.)	Persepolis; Bisútún; Hamadán; on Tablets from Warka.
485	Xerxes I. (Ahasuerus of Scripture.)	Persepolis; Susa; Hamadán; Ván; on Tablets from Warka; Vase at Paris.
472	Artaxerxes I. (Longimanus.)	
425	Xerxes II.	
424	Darius II. (Nothus.)	
404	Artaxerxes II. (Mnemon.)	Susa; Vase at Venice.
362	Artaxerxes III. (Ochus.)	Persepolis.
338	Arses.	
336	Darius III. (Codomanus.)	

GREEK EMPIRE IN CHALDÆA.

B.C.	Names of Kings.	Cuneiform Records, where Discovered.
330	Alexander the Great.	
311	Seleucus Nicator.	
280	Antiochus Soter.	On Tablets from Warka.
261	Antiochus Theos.	
246	Seleucus Callinicus.	
226	Seleucus Ceraunus.	
223	Antiochus the Great	On Tablets from Warka.
187	Seleucus Philopator.	
175	Antiochus Epiphanes.	
164	Antiochus Eupator.	
	&c. &c.	

No cuneiform inscriptions have been discovered of later date than Antiochus the Great.

THE END.

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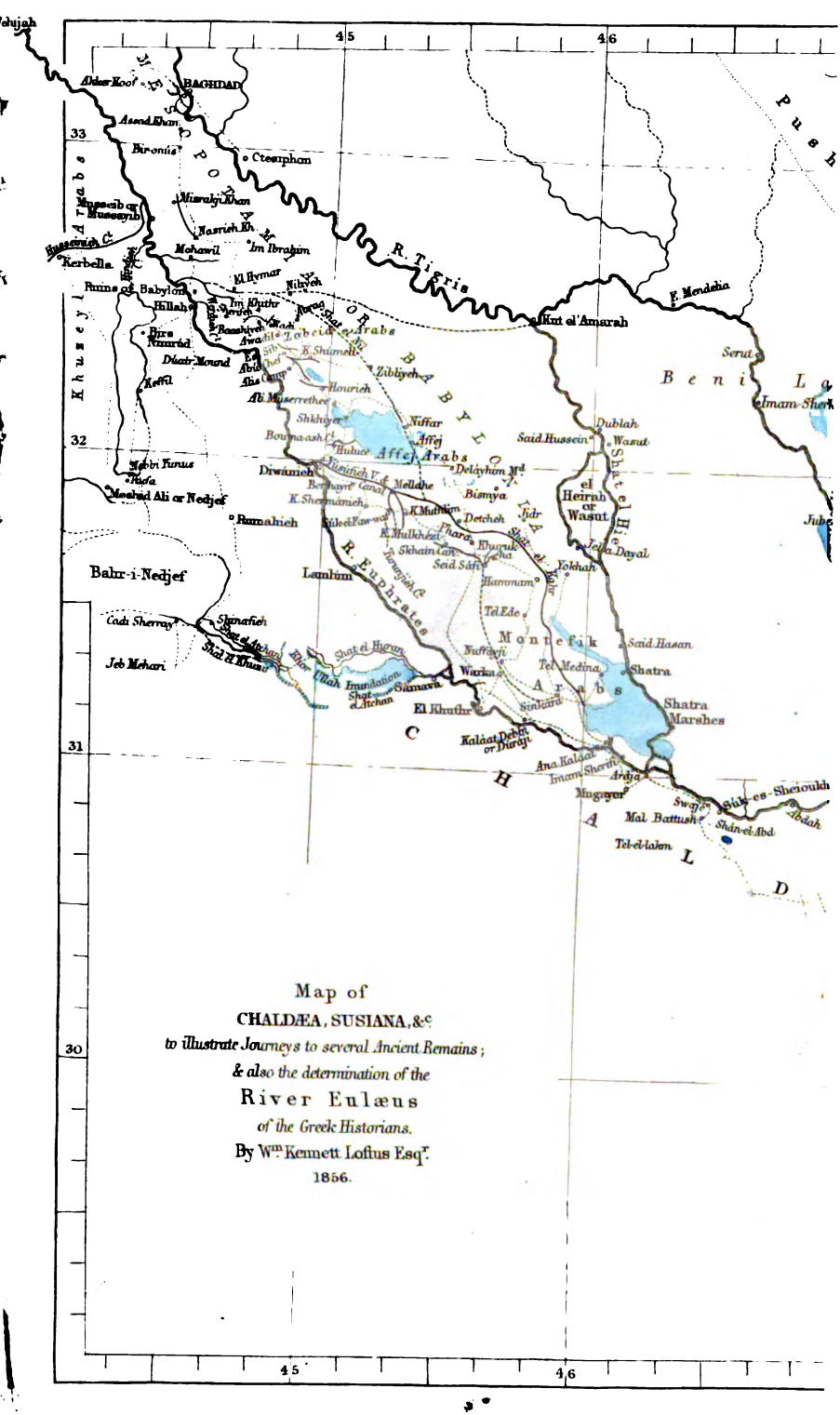

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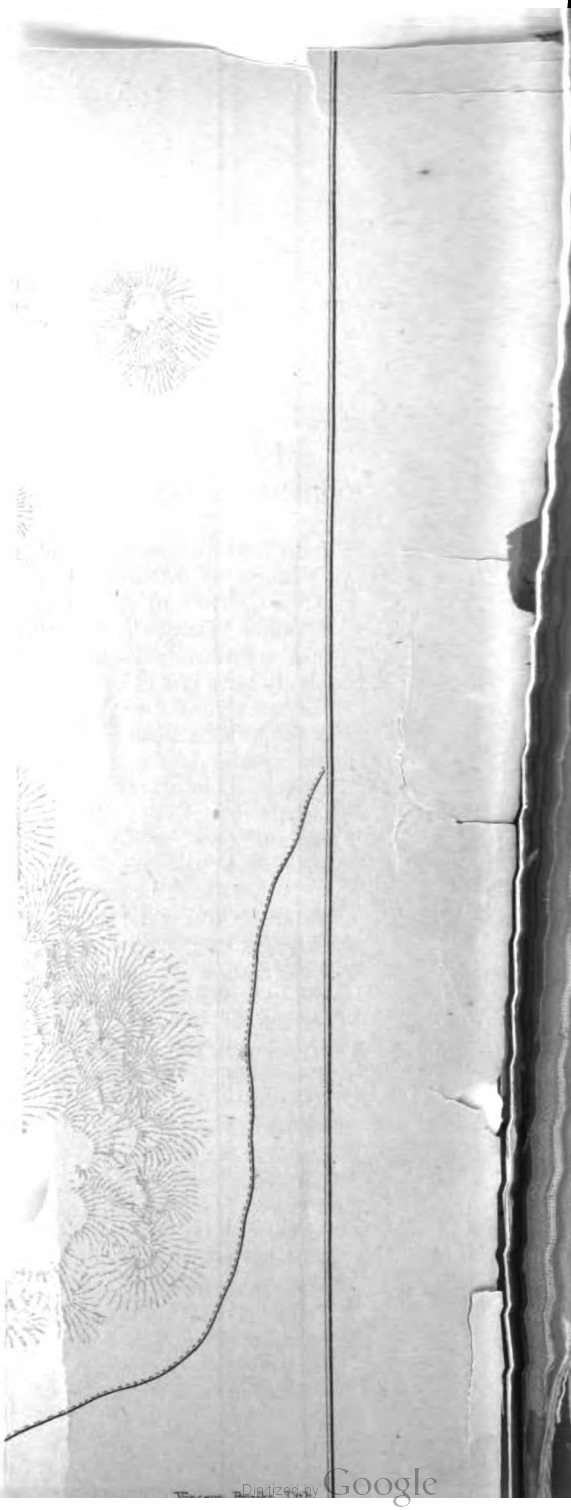
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